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FORTY-SIXTH SESSION

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THIRD COMMITTEE
32nd meeting
held on
Wednesday, 6 November 1991
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 32nd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. AL-SHAALI (United Arab Emirates)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 96: NARCOTIC DRUGS (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 96: NARCOTIC DRUGS (continued) (A/46/3 (chap. VI, sect. E), A/46/222, 264, 336, 338, 480, 511; A/C.5/46/23)

1. Ms. TOBJI (Tunisia) said that although her country was not an illicit drug producer, consumer or transit route, it was greatly concerned about the spread of drug trafficking, particularly in Africa. Drug abuse threatened the very fabric of society by fostering crime and terrorism, hindering socio-economic development and endangering human lives, especially those of young people.

2. In confronting the problem, it was essential to consider its root causes, which lay in poverty, unemployment, ignorance and all the other components of a deteriorating social environment. Undoubtedly, Governments had primary responsibility for correcting such situations through appropriate legislation and arrangements for the prevention and treatment of drug addiction. However, the results of such actions would not be lasting unless standards of living were improved through the creation of a favourable socio-economic environment.

3. Tunisia, which had ratified the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, had taken preventive legislative action to avoid becoming a route for the transport of illicit drugs. A new law against drug production and trafficking amended existing penalties, distinguishing between occasional users and addicts and between isolated and organized traffickers, and providing for longer prison sentences. In addition, the Ministry of Public Health was considering regulations on the import of raw materials for psychotropic substances, and was tightening controls on prescriptions for psychotropic drugs. Customs authorities had also strengthened their operations and were conducting systematic inspections to prevent illicit trafficking.

4. Since national efforts must be complemented by international action, her delegation welcomed the establishment of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNIDCP), which would support regional and subregional technical cooperation projects to combat illicit drug production, trafficking and addiction and to ensure the treatment, rehabilitation and social reintegration of addicts.

5. Mr. OUNPHATHAI (Lao People's Democratic Republic) said that States were not in a position to deal with the growing drug problem individually. He therefore welcomed such United Nations initiatives as the Global Programme of Action and the Political Declaration adopted by the General Assembly at its seventeenth special session, and the establishment of UNIDCP under resolution 45/179.

(Mr. Ounphathai, Lao People's Democratic Republic)

6. Laos, a developing country, gave highest priority to eliminating the cultivation of opium poppies by ethnic minorities in remote areas of its territory. Its two-pronged strategy consisted, first, of an energetic campaign promoting alternative crops, in the context of which it had concluded cooperation agreements with the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control (UNFDAC) for an integrated rural development project, as well as a cooperation agreement with the United States. The project aimed to provide alternative means of livelihood for the highlanders who cultivated opium poppies by creating the necessary economic, social and technical conditions for crop-substitution activities in the highlands and rice cultivation in the lowlands.

7. The second component of the strategy consisted of strengthening laws against illicit drug trafficking. A new penal code imposed severe penalties against drug traffickers, and drug seminars for customs agents and police officers had been held. The Lao Government's cooperative efforts included participation in United States and Japanese training seminars for customs and law-enforcement personnel and in the 1990 meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies (HONLEA). It had also introduced arrangements for close cooperation with such neighbouring countries as Myanmar and Thailand in the areas of training and information exchange on the suppression of illicit drug production and trafficking.

8. Only an international network set up by the United Nations and other international organizations could lead to effective implementation of General Assembly resolution S-17/2, which had proclaimed the period from 1991 to 2000 the United Nations Decade against Drug Abuse. His Government was committed to continuing its cooperation with the international community in that area.

9. Mr. DE MARCHANT ET D'ANSEMBOURG (Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the European Community and its twelve member States, said that the effects of the drug problem ranged from distorting economic development and destabilizing Governments to destroying the lives of individuals and families, and even the very fabric of society. The escalation of the problem in recent years was a side-effect of global social and economic evolution. Its complexity required an integrated approach which gave equal priority to law enforcement, prevention and demand reduction, and which involved public health and social services as well as the criminal-justice system.

10. It was imperative, on both moral and practical grounds, for all States to cooperate in combating the drug problem. The United Nations, which was the focal point for such cooperation, had adopted three important conventions on the subject, the latest of which was the 1988 Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. The European Community and all its member States had signed that Convention and had either begun or completed the ratification process, and urged all other States to do likewise. Other milestones in the legal area included the Global Programme of

(Mr. De Marchant et d'Ansembourg, Netherlands)

Action and the Political Declaration adopted at the seventeenth special session of the General Assembly, the 1987 Comprehensive Multidisciplinary Outline of Future Activities in Drug Abuse Control and the London Declaration adopted at the World Ministerial Summit to Reduce the Demand for Drugs and Combat the Cocaine Threat. His delegation was pleased at the considerable progress made in implementing those plans and strategies.

11. His delegation regretted that the necessary information on the enhancement of the United Nations structure for drug-abuse control had not been available earlier. The information should have been presented in a single report well in advance of the Third Committee's debate.

12. He fully supported the strategic directions of the Executive Director of UNIDCP. The European Community and its member States would continue to provide financial support to UNIDCP, and invited all other States to increase their voluntary contributions to the Programme, which must also receive an adequate share of funds from the regular budget. The proposed UNIDCP Fund would also be useful.

13. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 45/179 and the Global Programme of Action, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs had improved its functioning as a policy-making body and had given valuable guidance to UNIDCP and other United Nations drug-control bodies. Subsequently, the Economic and Social Council had adopted resolution 1991/49 by consensus, which had been joined by the twelve States members of the European Community. Such a spirit of cooperation and consensus was important for the Commission's effectiveness.

14. The Twelve looked forward to the Executive Director's report on regional approaches to the drug problem and hoped that it would take due account of the demand-reduction aspect. Regional meetings dealing with demand reduction should take place in the HONLEA framework. Although existing mechanisms should be strengthened, resources must be allocated effectively to avoid duplication and to ensure adequate financial, technical and human resources for all drug-control structures, including UNIDCP.

15. The European Community had established a High-level Intergovernmental Group of Coordinators, which had elaborated a comprehensive European Plan to combat drug abuse. The Plan, which emphasized demand reduction, provided for the establishment of a European Drug Monitoring Centre focusing on the social and health aspects of drug abuse. Regional cooperation was also pursued through the Pompidou Group, which had acquired considerable expertise in the field.

16. To curb illicit drug trafficking in the prospective single European market, the States Members of the Community were strengthening controls at their external borders and intensifying customs cooperation. The fight

(Mr. De Marchant et d'Ansembourg, Netherlands)

against drug-related crime would continue through the Trevi Group, consisting of Ministers of Justice and of the Interior, and through the Mutual Assistance Group, consisting of customs authorities. The forthcoming establishment of a European Drugs Intelligence Unit and of Europol would bolster those efforts.

17. The European Community and its Member States cooperated with developing countries in combating all aspects of the drug problem by taking due account of its social and economic dimension. They provided assistance through integrated rural development programmes, crop-substitution projects and assistance in law enforcement, treatment and prevention. However, a subregional approach was also necessary to prevent drug-related activities from spreading to new areas. The Community was therefore supporting the economic restructuring efforts of Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru by granting them the same preferences it extended to least developed countries.

18. To prevent the diversion of chemicals used for drug manufacturing the Community's Council of Ministers had adopted regulations on the control of external trade with third countries, and was considering a similar mechanism for intra-European trade. In addition, the Community had developed rules concerning money-laundering, and recommended that countries should cooperate to trace, freeze and confiscate the proceeds of drug trafficking.

19. In fighting drug abuse, the international community should take a flexible and pragmatic approach, devoid of ideology, in order to ensure the health and social welfare of all.

20. Mr. BURCUOGLU (Turkey) said that his delegation supported the arrangements set forth in the Secretary-General's report on United Nations structure for drug-abuse control (A/46/480). The new United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNIDCP) must have adequate financial and human resources. It was essential to strengthen the Programme by increasing its share of the regular budget and seeking more generous voluntary contributions. An increased allocation would make it more autonomous and flexible in management and ensure optimal use of funds and sound long-term planning. With regard to the Programme's personnel arrangements, Turkey stressed the importance of recruitment on the basis of the broadest possible geographical representation.

21. His delegation firmly supported the proposals put forward by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, which would play an essential coordinating role. Through the establishment of the subsidiary committee, the Commission would be able to rationalize its work, restructure its agenda, cope with an expanded workload and deal more efficiently with general policy questions in all major areas of operations. A balanced approach to drug control was essential. His delegation was firmly opposed to the proliferation of sources of opiates and, in that context, supported Economic and Social Council resolution 1991/43.

(Mr. Burcuoglu, Turkey)

22. Turkey, a traditional producer, had achieved remarkable results in its struggle against illicit drug production and drug abuse. Situated on the "Balkan Route", it faced a growing challenge with regard to illicit transit and was mobilizing considerable resources to meet that challenge. Thanks to his Government's efforts, enormous quantities of narcotic drugs had been seized both in Turkey and in other countries along the route. His country had concluded numerous bilateral cooperation agreements in that field and actively participated in various forms of regional cooperation. Turkey collaborated effectively with the Programme and was determined to expand that cooperation and work with the main donor countries. In that connection, he supported the Programme's subregional strategy for the Balkans. Turkey, one of the countries least affected by drug abuse, had undertaken, in cooperation with UNIDCP, a scientific study to determine the causes of that phenomenon. His country had signed the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances and, as a member of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, would actively seek to enhance the Commission's effectiveness.

23. Mr. COSTA (Brazil) said that the United Nations could and should play a key role in fostering concerted action on the drug problem and that the growing spirit of consensus was reassuring. His Government was ready to contribute its efforts and available resources in the common endeavour, within the framework of the Charter, international law and the relevant treaties. A sound legal basis, both domestic and international was essential for combating illicit drug trafficking. Brazil had recently ratified the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, but even before ratification, the Brazilian authorities had taken broad measures to strengthen action against illicit drug trafficking in accordance with that Convention. His Government attached particular importance to the implementation of an international system for the control of precursors and chemicals used in drug production.

24. As to the social and economic aspects of the problem, he regretted that the Commission on Narcotic Drugs had not yet been able to review the recommendations of the Intergovernmental Expert Group to Study the Economic and Social Consequences of Illicit Traffic in Drugs, as requested in General Assembly resolution 45/149. He looked forward to the views of the Executive Director of UNIDCP on these recommendations.

25. With regard to the Secretary-General's report on the enhancement of the United Nations structure for drug-abuse control (A/46/480), his delegation was satisfied with the pace of setting up UNIDCP. In connection with policy guidance (ibid., para. 10) - which should be based on the wishes of all Member States on an equal footing - he stressed the importance of the Council's discussions on expanding the membership of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. Regarding the Commission's terms of reference, set forth in Council resolution 1991/38, it would be useful if the Secretariat could clarify the implications of the interpretation of the words "legislative overview" raised by the Secretary-General in paragraph 10 of his report.

(Mr. Costa, Brazil)

26. The Programme had already achieved significant goals, and the structure proposed by its Executive Director should enable it to live up to expectations. The Executive Director's participation in meetings of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) would enable him to ensure coordination, complementarity and non-duplication of drug-control activities throughout the United Nations system. Brazil shared the concern over the volume of resources available to the Programme, 92 per cent of which would come from voluntary funds. The growing challenge of the drug problem must spur Governments to continue increasing their contributions to drug-control activities. Brazil fully supported the Programme's endeavour to diversify its sources of funds for operational activities and to mobilize complementary funding from other multilateral and bilateral sources, as well as Commission resolution 3 (XXXIV) which urged Governments to provide the fullest possible support, particularly by increasing general-purpose extrabudgetary contributions to the Programme.

27. Mr. KOUNCOU (Congo) welcomed the creation of UNIDCP and commended its Executive Director. The Congo supported the idea of a global approach, but the success of the Global Programme of Action adopted by the General Assembly at its seventeenth special session would depend on effective action, especially at national and regional levels. Today, owing to action in the priority areas - the Andes and South-East and South-West Asia - Africa had become an important drug transit route to North America and Europe. In addition, there was an alarming increase in hard drug consumption in Africa, and areas of poverty harboured high-risk groups. There was an urgent need for the international community to consider increasing its programmes for Africa, to include the reduction of illicit supplies, prevention of drug addiction, and treatment and rehabilitation of drug addicts.

28. Subregional cooperation was still in its early stages in Central Africa. In 1990 a seminar on policy coordination and preparation of subregional programmes for Central African countries had been held at Libreville with the assistance of France. The Economic Community of Central African States had set up a permanent drug committee to coordinate national action. Many African countries were concerned about the inadequacy of prevention and suppression laws to cope with drug-related crime.

29. His delegation wished to thank France, with which the Congo cooperated closely in the training of its experts, for setting up a laboratory for drug analysis and detection and for providing matériel and communications for anti-drug units.

30. Mr. SEZAKI (Japan) welcomed the creation of the UNIDCP and commended its Executive Director. He was disappointed, however, over the delay in submitting the report of the Secretary-General on administrative and financial arrangements regarding the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (A/C.5/46/23), which his delegation regarded as of critical importance. Since the Programme was to serve as a model for reforming United Nations organs, an

(Mr. Sezaki, Japan)

early decision was needed on its framework and arrangements so that it could assume its full mandate as soon as possible. His delegation hoped that the Fifth Committee would study the report carefully and attempt to arrive at a conclusion as to the best structure and resource level. Japan had contributed every year since 1973 to the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control and in the current year would contribute $3 million to the new Fund.

31. With the coming into force of the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, the world had acquired a powerful weapon. Japan was in the process of becoming a party to the Convention and would participate fully in international cooperation based on the Convention as soon as possible.

32. He commended the work of the Financial Action Task Force and the Chemical Action Task Force initiated respectively at the Summit of the Arch and the Houston Economic Summit, in which Japan had played an active part. The alleged involvement of the Bank of Credit and Commerce International in laundering drug money on a vast scale was a typical instance of such criminal activity and pinpointed the need for adequate machinery for international cooperation to bring it to an end. Existing measures for regulating international trade in chemicals clearly did not prevent their diversion to illicit drug manufacture. The achievements of the two Task Forces in combating money laundering and the diversion of chemicals deserved the warmest praise, but the crucial question was how many countries would implement their recommendations and how effectively. It was vital for all nations to become parties to the 1988 Convention as soon as possible.

33. Japan welcomed the development of the regional cooperation urged by the Global Programme of Action. His country had placed special emphasis on cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region, where two of the world's three major drug-producing areas were located, and in February 1991 his Government had hosted a Meeting of Senior Officials on Drug Abuse Issues in Asia and the Pacific, held in Tokyo, with the cooperation of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). The meeting had been attended by representatives of 46 countries, including the drug-producing countries of the Golden Triangle and the Golden Crescent and 13 international organizations, and had adopted the Tokyo Declaration on Enhanced Regional Cooperation for Drug Abuse Control in Asia and the Pacific, which included a proposal for the establishment of a coordinating centre to promote and develop subregional strategies. The centre would be created within the framework of the Programme, using existing facilities as far as possible and bearing in mind the need to avoid duplication.

34. With regard to drug problems in Japan, there had been a sharp increase in the volume of cocaine seized in 1990 - five times as much as in the preceding year - and in drug-related crime. Almost all the illegal narcotics circulating in Japan were smuggled in from abroad. Japan would continue its policy of cooperation both to combat the global narcotics problem and to prevent drugs from being smuggled into the country.

(Mr. Sezaki, Japan)

35. Since 1962, Japan had held annual seminars on the control of drug-related offences for drug enforcement officials from South-East Asia, Latin America, the Republic of Korea and the Middle East, the aim being to familiarize others with investigative techniques and promote the sharing of information and experience. Since 1987 it had also made contributions in that field within the framework of the Colombo Plan for Cooperative Economic and Social Development in Asia and the Pacific.

36. Mr. SKIBSTED (Denmark), speaking on behalf of the five Nordic countries, said that the creation of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNIDCP) had been an essential step forward. It was particularly important that both normative functions and operational activities should be coordinated within a single secretariat. There was, however, a need for greater efforts by the United Nations. The production of illicit drugs was growing and illegal trafficking was becoming more organized. Addiction was on the increase and abusers were spreading the HIV virus on a world-wide scale.

37. Many people were questioning whether the fight against illicit drugs could be won: whether the problem had grown too big to be solved and whether effective resistance could be offered to the drug traffickers' ruthless profiteering in human suffering. The answer must be yes. The United Nations was in a unique position to take on the task and there was world-wide agreement, demonstrated at a number of important international meetings, that the United Nations must play an active part. The new Programme would enable it to do so.

38. The Nordic countries would be contributing more than $10 million to the UNIDCP budget in 1991, but they stressed that all Member States must share the financial responsibility and that a greater proportion of its resources should come from the regular budget. The financial regulations of the UNIDCP Fund should, however, be flexible enough to attract non-earmarked contributions from donors.

39. If the United Nations was to play a more active role, an integrated secretariat would not be enough: the entire United Nations system must become involved, and United Nations action must be coordinated with regional and national efforts and with programmes initiated by non-governmental organizations. There was no lack of mandate - for example the Comprehensive Multidisciplinary Outline for Future Activities in Drug Abuse Control (CMO), the Global Programme of Action, the London Declaration, and resolutions of the General Assembly - and the Programme must now translate its mandate into concrete action and to set priorities.

40. The Nordic countries welcomed the Secretary-General's report on the United Nations structure for drug-abuse control (A/46/480) but regretted that it had been issued at such a late stage and that the related report to be discussed in the Fifth Committee (A/C.5/46/23) had been issued only a few days earlier. That had made it difficult for Member States to analyse the Secretary-General's proposals before they were taken up.

(Mr. Skibsted, Denmark)

41. The Nordic countries agreed that the Programme should be the focal point for a comprehensive world-wide drug-control strategy and that it would have to work out plans for activities to be carried out either nationally or by the Programme, by other United Nations organs, or by intergovernmental or non-governmental organizations. They also emphasized the importance of developing new and complementary strategies as the drug programme assumed new dimensions. Hitherto, little attention had been given to the economic and political dimensions which were becoming increasingly interrelated with the drug problem. They welcomed the intention to develop closer cooperation with the World Bank and other financial institutions and would comment on financial and administrative issues in the Fifth Committee.

42. Mrs. SYAHRUDDIN (Indonesia) said that the international community was moving forward from the stage of defining the scenario for combating drug abuse to the action stage, characterized by the establishment of UNIDCP. Its broad mandate should strengthen United Nations capacity to take a comprehensive approach to international drug control and to employ available resources more efficiently.

43. In view of the UNIDCP Executive Director's responsibility for coordination of all drug-control activities, the decision to invite him to participate in the work of the Administrative Committee on Coordination was a positive step. Identification of focal points for drug-abuse control and compilation of a directory should further support coordination within the United Nations system. Her delegation looked forward to learning more about regional and country master plans designed to serve as a yardstick for all national and international drug-control activities.

44. Her delegation supported the enlargement of the membership of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and Economic and Social Council resolutions 1991/38 and 39 intended to improve its functioning. It was regrettable that the Commission had been unable to consider the recommendations of the Intergovernmental Expert Group to Study the Economic and Social Consequences of Illicit Traffic in Drugs, but the summary contained in the Secretary-General's report (A/46/338) was useful. The technical and administrative independence of the International Narcotics Control Board had been preserved within the UNIDCP structure, and her delegation commended it as an effective force for the control of drugs for medical and scientific purposes.

45. In addition to law-enforcement activities to prevent its use as a transit country, Indonesia continued to emphasize education and prevention, with the goal of creating a socio-cultural attitude that rejected drug abuse. It was committed to active partnership in the cause of international drug control.

46. Mr. SEGER (Observer for Switzerland) said that his country, as a member of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, participated actively in the efforts of the international community against drug trafficking and abuse and was among the major donors to UNIDCP.

47. Switzerland, being directly concerned by drug trafficking and abuse, had strengthened its criminal legislation, and its authorities cooperated freely with their counterparts in other countries. Some success in combating money laundering and control of precursors had already been achieved. His Government had undertaken procedures for ratifying the three major drug Conventions, which should be completed the following year.

48. Mr. MONTALVO (Ecuador) said that the global campaign to eradicate drug trafficking and abuse should be based on the fundamental principles of the United Nations Charter and on the shared responsibility of the entire international community. Both narcotics producers and consumers should have an equal commitment to a solution, which would never be found through paternalism and authoritarianism. A truly humane and just response would arise only from dialogue based on respect, understanding and equality.

49. Possible solutions should be considered in their socio-economic context, since drug abuse and its terrible consequences were a result of unjust social and economic structures. Since the disease attacked those structures as a whole, the response should also be structural and global. In Latin America, any anti-drug campaign that did not address the economic crisis and the grinding poverty would be futile. The new international order being established, subtly but inexorably, should apply the same market principles to that evil, since the demand stimulated the supply. Prevention, rather than repression or rehabilitation, should be given priority. Without supplementary measures such as crop substitution, fair commodity prices, guarantees of equitable international trade, investment in the production sector and external debt relief, any proposal would be utopian.

50. Ecuador had assumed its portion of the shared responsibility for the drug problem and had strengthened its legal structures to that end. His Government had ratified the Vienna Convention in 1990 as a legal framework for its relations with other States. It supported all joint programming initiatives and efforts by the international community to combat drug abuse and trafficking.

51. With respect to the Secretary-General's reports (A/46/480 and 511), some of the efforts already made by UNIDCP were commendable and gave reason for hope. However, the Programme was still involved in administrative and organizational matters, and little progress had been made in rationalizing its operations. It appeared that there remained much duplication and lack of coordination among the drug-control agencies, which was far from the spirit of General Assembly resolution 45/179. Nevertheless, his delegation fully supported the objectives of UNIDCP in the hope that, with the necessary adjustments and adequate funding, it could become effective.

(Mr. Montalvo, Ecuador)

52. In document A/46/480, paragraph 29, the statement that "the Programme must act in accordance with the wishes and requirements of Member States and major donors" could give rise to misunderstandings incompatible with the principles of solidarity and cooperation among nations. His delegation understood the great importance of the contributions of the major donors and expressed its gratitude. However, they should not be permitted to have unilateral influence on policy. The fight against drug abuse and illicit trafficking involved every member of the international community, without distinctions according to economic capacity. UNIDCP must take care to base its actions on that humanistic principle, not financial criteria.

53. Mr. TRAXLER (Italy) said that, while his Government maintained severe criminal penalties against drug abuse and related crime, it was increasing its treatment and rehabilitation efforts. The drug chain could be broken, mainly through action to reduce demand. A world-wide information campaign aimed particularly at youth remained one of the most effective means to counter the spread of drug abuse.

54. Although there were many options, as yet there was no decisive weapon with which to win the war against drugs. Comprehensive strategies were required, since the drug problem was deeply interrelated and every element of the drug chain - production, trafficking and abuse - must be addressed simultaneously. Since no country was immune from the threat of drugs, the entire international community should be joined in a web of mutual commitment of resources.

55. Italy was convinced that the United Nations was the best forum for such action, and had been among the first to ratify the 1988 Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. It was also among the major donors, and stressed the importance of increased voluntary contributions to UNIDCP. His delegation fully endorsed the recommendations in the Secretary-General's report (A/46/480) and also urged that UNIDCP staffing requirements should be met.

56. Mr. MONTAÑO (Mexico) commended the work carried out by the International Narcotics Control Board, which was very valuable for considering objectively the international situation in the field of drug trafficking. The international campaign against illicit drug trafficking should be based on strict adherence to the principles of the Charter and international law, particularly respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference in internal affairs. In that connection, he was concerned about certain references in the Secretary-General's report (A/46/480) to evaluating national drug-control activities or directing actions taken by countries in that field. His Government viewed the new United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNIDCP) as a vital instrument for international cooperation based on respect for the sovereign decisions taken by each country.

(Mr. Montaño, Mexico)

57. The international drug-control strategy should include consideration of the economic and social consequences of illicit drug trafficking, money laundering, use of precursor chemicals and the demand for drugs. The Programme should follow a balanced approach, taking into account all aspects of the drug problem in accordance with the Charter and the principle of shared responsibility, with balanced attention given to both supply and demand.

58. Mexico attached particular importance to the Programme's operational and technical cooperation activities, which were essential in helping Governments comply with the relevant international Conventions and carry out the recommendations of the Comprehensive Multidisciplinary Outline of Future Activities in Drug Abuse Control. The resources available for those activities should be used in a more rational and effective manner than in the past. Accordingly, it was essential to ensure that States in all the geographical regions participated in the decisions on the mobilization and use of voluntary contributions for operational and technical cooperation activities. That aspect should be given particular attention, especially by the countries which could benefit from such cooperation. Subsequent reports on the Programme's activities should provide information on projects aimed at preventing drug abuse and drug trafficking in the industrialized countries.

59. Mexico supported the Programme's efforts to provide technical and scientific assistance and felt that those activities should be stepped up. Given the alarming growth of the drug problem, there was an urgent need for a comparative analysis of UNIDCP activities and of their efficiency and effectiveness.

60. His Government had carried out an enormous effort to set up more effective mechanisms for eradicating illicit drug trafficking. Enormous quantities of drugs, vehicles and weapons had been confiscated and more than 45,000 persons had been arrested. Mexico was aware of the need to adapt its drug-control policies in order to ensure their effectiveness. It planned to lay down a new strategy for combating the cultivation of drug crops and for using up-to-date technology against criminal organizations involved in drug production. Mexico had developed a more effective policy to fight drug trafficking in all areas and had stepped up its efforts to eradicate illicit plantations and to intercept aircraft used to transport illicit drugs.

61. His delegation supported the work of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission and was encouraged by regional cooperation combining the domestic activities of each country with efforts at the continental level. The elaboration by the United Nations of an international convention on reduction of the illicit demand for drugs would supplement the programmes undertaken to date. The establishment of an international system for evaluating the scale of drug abuse and reducing demand was essential in order to gain a clear picture of progress made and obstacles encountered. As a demonstration of its commitment to multilateral cooperation within the United Nations system, his country, in spite of the economic situation facing it, had decided to increase its contribution to UNIDCP by $50,000 for 1992.

62. Mrs. SAMONTE-LIMJUCO (Philippines) said that UNIDCP represented the first step towards establishing a single world-wide drug-control programme. The new dimensions of the drug problem required a more comprehensive and rational approach towards drug control and a more efficient United Nations structure, which should play a central role in that effort. Action by Governments must be coordinated to prevent drug traffickers from shifting their bases of operation to countries where controls were inadequate.

63. The Philippines was firmly committed to international efforts to combat drug abuse and illicit trafficking. Owing to its geographical situation, foreign-based drug syndicates used the country as a transshipment point for illicit drugs. Her country's eradication activities had markedly decreased in 1990 as a result of political and economic problems and natural disasters. Large-scale marijuana cultivation was expected to increase, and criminal organizations controlled the production of marijuana and its shipment to international markets. Her delegation hoped that, through the United Nations, appropriate technology for the detection of illicit drug cultivation and effective and environmentally safe herbicides for eradication would be provided to the Philippines.

64. Marketing opportunities must be made available to producer countries in order to promote alternative economic activities. In 1990, her country had carried out more concerted efforts in the field of preventive education and information. Its comprehensive school-based drug-abuse prevention programme sought to introduce drug-education concepts into school curricula in order to develop positive attitudes and behaviour patterns. The drug-abuse prevention programme for street children was designed to provide such children with alternatives to make their lives meaningful and integrate them into the mainstream.

65. The consistent implementation of the national strategy against drug abuse, initiated in 1972, remained the focal point for government programmes for drug-abuse prevention and control. The strategy involved the simultaneous implementation of programmes for drug-supply reduction and drug-demand reduction.

66. International anti-drug efforts should focus on research into environmentally safe crop-eradication methods, aerial photography and tracking to locate areas of illicit cultivation, and establishing legal authority for attacking drug trafficking between supplier and consumer countries. Consideration should also be given to setting up a pilot programme consisting of a drug-enforcement unit organized by the United Nations with personnel from various countries, and to devising strategies to reduce demand on the basis of broad public education, expanded treatment and rehabilitation measures and appropriate social reform programmes.

67. Mrs. AGUILERA (Mexico), speaking also on behalf of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela, recalled that her delegation had recently requested postponement of the consideration of item 96 because of the delay in submitting the relevant documentation, and had asked that the time-limit for submitting draft resolutions on the item should be extended. Accordingly, she proposed that the time-limit should be extended until 11 November and that the consideration of the draft resolutions should be completed as soon as possible.

68. Mr. TRAXLER (Italy) supported that proposal.

69. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to extend the deadline for submitting draft resolutions on the item under consideration until 11 November.

70. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SIXTH SESSION

Official Records

THIRD COMMITTEE
33rd meeting
held on
Wednesday, 6 November 1991
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 33rd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. SLABY (Czechoslovakia)

later: Mr. AL-SHAALI (United Arab Emirates)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 96: NARCOTIC DRUGS (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 96: NARCOTIC DRUGS (continued) (A/46/3 (chap. VI, sect. E), A/46/222, 264, 336, 388, 480, 511)

1. Mrs. AHMAD (Brunei Darussalam) said that the issue of narcotic drugs was of great concern to everyone, since the drug problem threatened human values and jeopardized the security and stability of nations, regardless of their level of economic development or political ideology. Narcotic drugs were a common enemy whose eradication required collective effort and close cooperation between States. The United Nations could play a crucial role through a global programme of action designed to eliminate drug abuse and drug trafficking.

2. In Brunei Darussalam, drug abuse was a problem of consumption of controlled narcotic substances rather than hard drugs. Nonetheless, illicit drug trafficking was a matter of great concern in view of Brunei Darussalam's location close to the Golden Triangle.

3. With 67 per cent of the population under the age of 30, Brunei Darussalam was fully aware of the threat posed to its youth by the drug problem. It was therefore applying a strategy of suppressing drug supply and increasing people's awareness of the dangers of addiction. That strategy had four objectives: (a) reduction of supply through the prevention of the entry of drugs and the control of domestic manufacture and production; (b) reduction of demand through programmes of preventive education, treatment and rehabilitation, and supervision; (c) detection of drug abuse by foreign workers through random screening tests; and (d) enhancement of regional and international cooperation. Voluntary organizations also played an active role which was complementary to government efforts in trying to eradicate the drug menace.

4. Brunei Darussalam participated in regional and international activities and had signed the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. Her delegation reiterated its commitment to United Nations efforts in promoting cooperation among all States with a view to alleviating drug problems, particularly those associated with drug trafficking.

5. Mr. HLAING (Myanmar) said that the menace of illicit drugs had assumed such alarming proportions that it was now universally recognized that narcotic drugs constituted a global challenge requiring a global response. That approach must encompass effective national measures and close international cooperation among States. It was therefore encouraging to note that over the past two years there had been a positive response from the international community, under the aegis of the United Nations.

(Mr. Hlaing, Myanmar)

6. The establishment of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNIDCP) was a timely measure. The Comprehensive Multidisciplinary Outline of Future Activities in Drug Abuse Control, adopted by the first International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, of 1987, the Global Programme of Action adopted by the General Assembly at its seventeenth special session, in 1990, and the Declaration issued at the World Ministerial Summit to Reduce the Demand for Drugs and to Combat the Cocaine Threat, held in London in April 1990, as well as General Assembly resolutions, not only provided useful guidelines but also lent a powerful sense of purpose and urgency in addressing that complex problem.

7. The drug problem must be tackled in all its aspects; it was imperative to make effective efforts to reduce demand and, at the same time, to reduce supply. His delegation felt that, in order to maintain a proper balance in those activities, more attention should be devoted to the demand-reduction aspect.

8. The fight against drugs should not be concerned only with hard drugs, such as opium and heroin; psychotropic substances also presented a serious problem. His delegation therefore felt that firm steps ought to be taken in the psychotropic substance-exporting countries which did not yet have adequate control regimes to put in place the necessary legal framework to regulate the export of those substances.

9. An effective international campaign against drug abuse required an adequate international legal framework. In that regard, the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances was a significant landmark. The number of States parties to that Convention had been increasing rapidly and, since December 1990, 18 more States had become parties to the Convention. States that had not yet done so should consider the possibility of becoming States parties to that important instrument.

10. At the national level, Myanmar in 1991 had publicly destroyed drug refineries, drug-refining paraphernalia and narcotic drugs. The destruction had been witnessed by representatives of the diplomatic corps and United Nations bodies, military attachés and the foreign press. The total value of the installations and materials destroyed in 1991 was $US 2.511 billion at the prevailing street value in the United States. The total value of materials destroyed in 1990 and 1991, under the programme of drug-supply reduction implemented after the advent to power of the State Law and Order Restoration Council, was $US 4.33 billion. The magnitude of Myanmar's contribution to the international campaign against narcotic drugs could not be measured in monetary terms alone; in terms of lives saved and social problems averted in other countries, that contribution was immeasurably higher.

11. At the bilateral and subregional levels, Myanmar was actively participating in subregional cooperation strategies with the assistance of

(Mr. Hlaing, Myanmar)

UNIDCP. In that respect, Myanmar and its immediate neighbours - China, Thailand and the Lao People's Democratic Republic - were in various stages of implementing cooperative arrangements which would effectively cover the area known as the Golden Triangle as well as areas contiguous to it.

12. At the international level, Myanmar was continuing to participate actively in various international forums concerned with drug-abuse control. Its accession in 1991 to the 1988 Convention marked a milestone in its participation in the international campaign. Myanmar was currently taking steps to amend the 1974 Narcotic and Dangerous Drugs Law and other relevant laws in order to bring them into line with the 1988 Convention.

13. Mr. WALKER (Jamaica) said that his country had participated in the establishment of the legal framework for international cooperation in the fight against drug abuse and illicit trafficking and in the organization of a new structure which enabled the United Nations to play a more central role in that fight. Jamaica was particularly pleased to have been able to furnish one of the small groups of experts appointed by the Secretary-General in accordance with General Assembly resolution 44/142.

14. On the basis of the structure outlined in document A/46/480, the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNIDCP) would provide valuable assistance to Member States through its various divisions. Those divisions would be of special importance to countries like Jamaica in supplementing their efforts to deal with the drug problem. Furthermore, his delegation agreed that UNIDCP, as well as intergovernmental bodies and Member States, would need timely and relevant information; accordingly, his delegation looked forward to the early establishment of an information resources management service which would define the objectives of an integrated information system.

15. Jamaica also agreed with the elements of a sound and rational strategy stated in paragraph 32 of document A/46/480. It should be recognized, however, that the objectives of UNIDCP remained to be determined. What was clear was that the Programme had been assigned an enormous task, the fulfilment of which would require adequate financial and other support. In that connection, he drew attention to General Assembly resolution 45/179, paragraph 12, which had been referred to in Economic and Social Council resolution 1991/47.

16. In accordance with the Global Programme of Action, Jamaica had established its own programme to combat drug abuse and illicit trafficking, including the upgrading of a special narcotics division in the Jamaican constabulary force. The Dangerous Drugs Act had been amended so as to increase the penalties imposed on persons convicted of drug offences, and further legislation authorizing the confiscation of the profits derived from illicit drug trafficking had been proposed.

(Mr. Walker, Jamaica)

17. Jamaica had concluded arrangements for the exchange of information with other members of the Caribbean Community and was seeking to increase manpower capabilities in the region through training. In July 1991, the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community had endorsed a Jamaican proposal for the establishment of a regional training centre for drug law enforcement officers.

18. As called for by the Global Programme of Action, Jamaica had also implemented a demand-reduction strategy which emphasized community involvement and educating the public, especially young people, through school curricula and the rehabilitation of drug users. UNIDCP was providing and coordinating funding for the Jamaica demand-reduction programme. The programme had been very successful and could perhaps be followed in other countries.

19. Mrs. SURAPOLBHICHET (Thailand) said that, although the international community was becoming increasingly aware of drug abuse and illicit trafficking, and although legal instruments had been developed to provide a framework for global efforts to combat the plague of drugs, the situation remained serious. Drug abuse was a matter of grave concern to her country and it reflected the need for the international community to adopt more comprehensive and concerted measures. The United Nations was the best forum for coordinating such efforts.

20. Thailand fully supported the creation of UNIDCP and believed that it would strengthen the United Nations drug abuse control structure. It was to be hoped that the Programme would have sufficient resources for the effective fulfilment of its mandate. Her delegation also commended UNIDCP on having contacted the major funding institutions in order to ensure that drug control became part of the relevant multilateral assistance efforts. In that regard, Thailand had already earmarked funds for increasing its contribution to the Programme.

21. Thailand was a member of the International Narcotics Control Board and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. The Government had made its anti-drug policy a national priority, and much of what it had done was in keeping with the strategies outlined in the Comprehensive Multidisciplinary Outline of Future Activities in Drug Abuse Control and the Global Programme of Action. Its policy aimed to reduce both supply and demand. On the supply side, the Government had focused on law enforcement and interdiction and had strengthened domestic anti-drug legislation with the approval of a bill authorizing the confiscation of drug traffickers' assets and imposing penalties on conspirators, in accordance with the 1988 Convention. That bill had paved the way for Thailand's future accession to the Convention. The Government also cooperated with foreign anti-drug liaison offices which had enhanced its law-enforcement activities.

22. Crop control was another effective strategy. A number of projects dealing with integrated rural development were under way in order to reduce

(Mrs. Surapolbhichet, Thailand)

the cultivation and the production of narcotics. The goal was to provide incentives for cultivators to stop growing illicit crops and to improve the quality of their lives. With a view to reducing the production of narcotics in the region, Thailand was undertaking a joint project with Myanmar, and was also extending subregional cooperation to other neighbouring countries.

23. However, to tackle the supply problem alone was not sufficient. The Government had launched an education programme and an information campaign to enhance public understanding of the dangers of drug addiction. Attention was focused on coordinating the various prevention projects, which totaled 166 in 1991, and on ensuring optimal utilization of resources and programme efficiency. Lastly, she expressed her delegation's appreciation to those countries which cooperated with Thailand in its efforts and which provided it with technical and financial assistance.

24. Mr. KABIR (Bangladesh) said that, while the drug problem in Bangladesh had not yet reached alarming proportions, it was necessary to adopt urgent measures before it was too late. To that end, countries like Bangladesh should be provided with all necessary international assistance. In his view, the drug problem must be combated on several fronts because of its multidimensional nature. First, the sources of production must be eradicated; accordingly, Governments should increase vigilance against the growers of illegal drugs and should offer them alternative crops. International assistance to supplement national efforts was vital in that regard.

25. Secondly, demand must be reduced, an aspect of the problem which had received greater attention in recent years. Thirdly, illicit trafficking must be controlled; that was a very difficult task, because it was common knowledge that the drug trade was carried on by international networks which unfortunately enjoyed the protection of some unscrupulous quarters. Those quarters, influenced by political or other interests, had managed to frustrate national and international efforts to break up the trafficking networks. Bangladesh and other countries had enacted laws which imposed the death penalty on drug traffickers.

26. Fourthly, it was necessary to solve the problem of money-laundering, which took place mainly through the activities of offshore banks. Vigilance must be increased and undercover agents must be used to control the activities of suspected banks from inside. Lastly, cooperation among customs agents must be fostered. The Customs Cooperation Council should renew its efforts to facilitate the dissemination of information on drug dealers and to make available to the developing countries the latest drug-detection technologies. His delegation accorded the highest priority to training customs and narcotics agents in the detection of drugs and trafficking operations. It also considered that the Technical Services Division of UNIDCP could play an important role in combating drug trafficking and money-laundering activities.

(Mr. Kabir, Bangladesh)

27. The greatest tragedy was that the young were so vulnerable to drug abuse. Efforts to protect them must be coordinated and consistent and education on the subject must be provided in the home and at school. The issue of drug abuse in all its manifestations must be dealt with in school curricula from the elementary level upwards.

28. Bangladesh had always stressed the importance of concerted action at national, regional and international levels, and UNIDCP deserved Bangladesh's fullest support. The Executive Director of UNIDCP had referred in his statement to the inclusion of a "drug-control" dimension in international development assistance. His delegation would like to have clarification of that point since it was concerned that that should not be used as an added conditionality for the disbursement of aid to recipient countries.

29. Programmes for the control of drug abuse in Bangladesh were in line with the Programmes of action adopted by the United Nations and other international organizations. Bangladesh had been among the first countries to ratify the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988 and was also a party to the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 and its 1972 Protocol and the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971. At the regional level, Bangladesh and the other member countries of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) were addressing the issue on a cooperative basis. Bangladesh was among the countries which had ratified the SAARC Convention on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.

30. At the national level, the Government had set up the Narcotic Control Board, which was the focal point for the coordination and implementation of the programmes of action. The duties of the Board were: to frame policies to prevent the injurious effects of narcotics and take measures for their implementation; to undertake research and collect data and information; to frame policies in relation to the manufacture, supply, use and control of narcotics; to frame policies in relation to the treatment and rehabilitation of drug addicts; to undertake educational and publicity measures aimed at creating public awareness; and to liaise with all ministries and international agencies concerned in order to coordinate activities. As far as curative measures were concerned, Bangladesh had set up a central treatment centre for drug addicts.

31. Mr. Al-Shaali (United Arab Emirates) took the Chair.

32. Mr. RAZALI (Malaysia) commended the Executive Director of UNIDCP on his report dealing with the structure and envisaged functions of the programme which, in his delegation's view, was generally in keeping with the intentions of General Assembly resolution 45/179. He was satisfied that the Executive Director, in integrating the structure, had striven to abide by the guiding principles enshrined in the various international treaties, the resolutions

(Mr. Razali, Malaysia)

and decisions of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council and the other related instruments. He hoped that continuity would be maintained throughout the development of the Programme, whose creation his delegation regarded as symbolizing a new resolve to address the drug menace through collective action, with the United Nations playing a coordinating role. However, such an enhanced role for the United Nations must be accompanied by vigorous efforts at the national level.

33. His delegation supported the approach envisaged by UNIDCP of an international strategy which encompassed reduction of supply, curbing of demand through the prevention of drug addiction and the treatment, rehabilitation and social integration of addicts, suppression of manufacture and trafficking, and regulation of the international market in drugs for medical and scientific uses. It was important to reduce both supply and demand, and all countries, in particular those affluent countries where demand was high, must take responsibility for reducing and eliminating drug abuse within their own borders.

34. The Government of Malaysia remained disappointed at what it regarded as the ineffective efforts of the Governments of certain affluent countries of the North, where demand appeared to be inexhaustible. Those Governments could not disclaim their own responsibility by assigning all blame to the areas of supply. His delegation would be watchful to ensure that the operation of UNIDCP would not be influenced in such a way as to upset the balance of concern between production and markets.

35. His delegation had taken note of the allocation of resources for the operational activities of the Programme for 1991 and wished to see future allocations for supply-and-demand reduction activities more commensurate with the equal importance attached to both. It also supported the proposal to strengthen UNIDCP's field network, in order to enable it better to discharge its responsibilities and to monitor its technical cooperation projects. Malaysia was prepared to cooperate and render the necessary assistance in the formulation of strategies and the development of master plans which would serve as a yardstick for all national and international drug-control activities. In developing a programme for any country, it was important for there to be extensive consultations with the country concerned and full respect for its sovereignty.

36. As far back as 1983 Malaysia had declared drug abuse and illicit trafficking a threat to national security. Its national strategy - the National Anti-Narcotic Five-Year Action Plan - emphasized demand reduction while also providing support for supply reduction. The key elements of the strategy were prevention, in particular through education; increased public awareness and the treatment and rehabilitation of drug addicts; a manpower-development research and evaluation programme; prevention of the entry of drugs into the country and the curtailing of supply within the country, through legislation, interdiction and enforcement; and international

(Mr. Razali, Malaysia)

cooperation and collaboration and strengthened coordination at federal, state and district levels. In addition, Malaysia had set up a National Drug Information System, which was a central database for monitoring and planning the prevention programme, and a Concentrated Integrated Project for the Eradication and Prevention of Drug Abuse, focused on areas identified as being of high risk as far as addiction and distribution were concerned.

37. Mr. RICHARDSON (United Kingdom) said that his delegation fully endorsed the views expressed earlier by the Permanent Representative of the Netherlands, who had also been speaking on behalf of the 12 States members of the European Community, and would therefore limit itself to commenting on the restructuring of the Division of Narcotic Drugs of the Secretariat, the secretariat of the International Narcotics Control Board and the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control, designed to enhance the effectiveness of the structure, and culminating in the creation of UNIDCP.

38. The Third Committee had played a major role in the process leading to the creation of UNIDCP, which had included informal consultations and formal international meetings, the adoption of important decisions and resolutions and the preparation of reports by the Secretary-General and an international Group of Experts. All that remained was to bring the process to its conclusion without delay.

39. Nevertheless, putting in place potentially effective machinery was no guarantee of effective action on the ground. If the international community was really serious about reducing and eliminating the problems caused by drug abuse, UNIDCP must have the resources necessary to fulfil its mandate as a focal point. In recent years, his country had increased its contributions to the Programme's operational activities and was also considering the Executive Director's request for more unearmarked contributions. In addition, drug abuse control should continue to be given high priority at the current level of United Nations resources, which should be deployed effectively, avoiding duplication of effort with the work of other agencies.

40. UNIDCP could not fight the drug war alone and the international community must also play its part. National and bilateral measures, such as those taken by the United Kingdom, must continue, including the training of customs officials and other law enforcement personnel, income substitution, demand-reduction programmes, particularly in the field of education; community-based initiatives; needle-exchange schemes and agreements to trace, freeze and confiscate proceeds from drug trafficking.

41. The United Nations conventions, the most recent of which was the 1988 Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, the Global Programme of Action, the London Summit Declaration and the United Nations System-Wide Plan of Action, in addition to other long-standing agreements, were a sound basis for future cooperation. Positive and effective action must now be taken on that basis and in accordance with the Programme's objectives.

(Mr. Richardson, United Kingdom)

42. At its thirty-fourth session, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs had adopted important resolutions aimed at increasing awareness of drug problems. As a result of that growing recognition, Governments had been urged to adopt balanced national strategies to give equal priority to both supply and demand mechanisms. His delegation welcomed the balanced approach taken by UNIDCP.

43. Lastly, he pointed out that, although the Third Committee could feel satisfied with the results achieved thus far, it had still not completed its work and that at the current session the General Assembly must take the necessary decisions to enable the Programme to move forward from the restructuring process. To that end, the United Kingdom remained fully committed to finding the solutions, both nationally and internationally, to all aspects of the drug problem.

44. Mrs. VARGAS (Nicaragua) said that narcotic drugs were an evil which had a strong and far-reaching impact on the economic, social and human development of countries. On the one hand, they generated considerable income for the powerful multinational cartels that controlled illicit trafficking, and, on the other hand, they caused irreparable damage to young people, increased delinquency, destroyed families, reduced productivity and heightened the costs of health care. The drug problem had no geographic boundaries and in most cases the countries affected lacked sufficient financial and institutional resources to combat it in an effective way. In developing countries, the effects of the problem were being compounded by the prevailing deterioration of social and economic conditions.

45. Owing to its geographic situation, Central America had not escaped the impact of drug trafficking. Nicaragua strongly believed that only coordinated and concerted action at the national, regional, subregional, bilateral and multilateral levels could lead to the most effective and appropriate ways to combat drug trafficking. Nicaragua had recently established an anti-drug department within the national police force, which had resulted in an increase in persons arrested for engaging in that illicit business and the confiscation of large quantities of various types of drugs. Furthermore, the department had focused its efforts on guarding Nicaragua's coasts, which were the most frequently used entry points by drug traffickers.

46. Nicaragua had participated in 1991 in the first meeting of the Central American commission for the eradication of the production, traffic, consumption and illicit use of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and related offences, and had been chosen to carry out the work of the Executive Secretariat of the Commission. In discharging that function, Nicaragua had signed a cooperation agreement with Colombia, which also provided for collaboration on the part of the Group of Three, made up of Mexico and Venezuela in addition to Colombia. In September 1991, her country had also signed a bilateral agreement with the United States, which identified mechanisms and laid down plans for joint efforts to combat narcotic drugs. Furthermore, her Government was in the process of signing a bilateral agreement with the Government of Mexico on cooperation in that field.

(Mrs. Vargas, Nicaragua)

47. Nicaragua had also been supporting and promoting concerted action in the subregion in order to cope with drug trafficking. In that context, it had signed in Managua the declaration of the first joint meeting of authorities responsible for ensuring compliance with the agreement on regional cooperation for the eradication of illicit drug trafficking, which, inter alia, defined subregional priorities in such areas as legal development, prevention through education, community mobilization, information and communication, and police and customs matters.

48. Her delegation wished to express its appreciation for the work of the United Nations in the struggle against drug abuse and illicit drug trafficking. It had supported and continued to support concerted actions and campaigns in that field; accordingly, in 1990, it had supported the recommendations of the Group of Experts which had advised the Secretary-General for the purpose of restructuring existing drug control mechanisms by establishing a single, more efficient, coordinated unit capable of responding to the problems arising from the new dimensions of the drug problem in various parts of the world. Those recommendations had served as the basis for the adoption of General Assembly resolution 45/179 on enhancement of the United Nations structure for drug abuse control. Her delegation considered it particularly important to ensure that the guiding principles used for the restructuring process were those set forth in international drug-control treaties.

49. The United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, which her country had signed and ratified, was one of the most important agreements because it included areas not dealt with in other instruments and contained fundamental concepts for combating narcotic drugs, such as shared responsibility, international cooperation and the adoption of the principles of sovereign equality, the territorial integrity of States and non-intervention in their internal affairs. Of equal importance were the resolutions of the Economic and Social Council, particularly resolution 1991/38, and the Global Programme of Action adopted by the General Assembly, which outlined the strategies to be followed in order to combat drug abuse and illicit drug trafficking in all their aspects. Those strategies should be included in the policies which were adopted as part of the new United Nations structure in that field.

50. Her country attached particular importance to the Division for Operational Activities, which was responsible for coordinating technical cooperation strategies worldwide and for which it would be seeking assistance in the near future.

51. She urged the international community to provide the funds necessary for the effective functioning of UNIDCP. She stressed that it was only through a concerted and coordinated effort by all countries that short- and medium-term results could be obtained in the fight against illicit drug trafficking.

52. Mr. AL-SAUD (Saudi Arabia) said that the issue of drugs was related to that of social development, since drug abuse and illicit trafficking represented a major obstacle to the development and progress of societies. In that regard, his delegation welcomed the establishment of UNIDCP. The four substantive components of the Programme would enable it to combat the drug problem and rid society of that threat.

53. According to the report of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs on its thirty-fourth session (E/1991/24), there was general agreement that regional approaches should be used in considering the measures for the prevention of drug abuse and illicit trafficking. A regional and balanced approach in that field would contribute to the development of a universal view of drug abuse on an international scale and would foster understanding of the various aspects of the problem. The report mentioned the increasing abuse of opiates, especially heroin, in Africa and the Near and Middle East. That trend, as well as the illegal production of drugs, particularly in south-west Asia, was disturbing.

54. His delegation attached great importance to the two draft resolutions contained in the report of the Subcommission on Illicit Drug Traffic and Related Matters in the Near and Middle East on its twenty-seventh session (E/CN.7/1991/6). The draft resolutions concerned, respectively, the establishment of regional drug law enforcement countermeasures in the Near and Middle East in the context of socio-economic and cultural development and the convening of a meeting at the ministerial level in the Near and Middle East to enhance the effectiveness of cooperation in resolving matters related to illicit trafficking and drug abuse. Those draft resolutions should be given serious consideration in relation to the programme of action proposed by the Secretary-General.

55. With respect to his country's efforts to combat drugs, he noted that the Ministry of the Interior, in cooperation with the other authorities concerned, was mandated to combat illicit trafficking in drugs and, in cooperation with the Ministry of Health, was responsible for preventing illicit trafficking in legal drugs and substances used for scientific purposes.

56. Under local laws and regulations, Saudi authorities applied harsh punishment to drug smugglers. In addition, religious instruction, by urging people to follow Islamic law, which prohibited the use of substances harmful to health and society and to uphold moral standards, contributed in great measure to reducing the danger of drug use and its effect on society, the family, and individuals.

57. The establishment by the Ministry of Health of three major hospitals in Riyadh, Damman, and Jeddah for the treatment and rehabilitation of drug addicts had yielded benefits. The Narcotics Department of the Ministry of the Interior was responsible for implementing government policies to protect the country and its citizens against drug abuse. Its activities at the national level included taking measures against drug smugglers, traffickers and users and implementing awareness programmes in cooperation with other government authorities. It also carried out information campaigns on the dangers of

(Mr. Al-Saud, Saudi Arabia)

drugs, by showing films, holding competitions and seminars in the universities and schools, and printing and distributing leaflets. As a result of those efforts, drug abuse had decreased by 50 per cent.

58. At the regional level, the General Directorate of Drug Abuse Prevention was strengthening its cooperation and coordination with other prevention networks in the Arab and Islamic countries, with a view to creating a regional system for the exchange of information and, for the extradition of drug traffickers, based on bilateral agreements. The Directorate was also working with the Arab Office of Narcotic Affairs, which was an organ of the League of Arab States and was mandated to implement a unified Arab cooperation programme for narcotic substances and to prevent illlicit trafficking.

59. At the international level, the Directorate was cooperating with the agencies concerned in many other countries and with the United Nations and regional organizations. It was cooperating at the bilateral level with drug-enforcement agencies of the United States and its regional offices.

60. Mr. MOR (Israel) said that the region in which Israel was located was one of the world centres of illicit drug trafficking. Lebanon had for years been one of the largest growers of hashish in the world, with an annual production of approximately 800 tons, according to statistics from INTERPOL and the United States Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). Lebanese drug traffickers had begun in 1985 to cultivate opium poppies in addition to hashish, and to produce opium and heroin. In consequence, the drug industry had in recent years become the mainstay of the Lebanese economy: according to various estimations, it currently represented about 40 per cent of the gross national product (GNP).

61. Syrian intervention in Lebanon further complicated the situation of illicit drug trafficking in the Middle East. It was no secret that elements of the Syrian Government had for several years been involved in the cultivation of drug-producing plants and in drug production and trafficking in Lebanon. According to DEA estimates, the Syrian treasury was enriched every year by a billion dollars in drug profits.

62. There was no production of illegal drugs of any kind in Israel. Nevertheless, intense drug trafficking near its urban centres posed a tremendous threat to Israeli society. Drug use in his country had grown considerably in recent years. According to the police and drug-enforcement authorities in Israel, the number of drug addicts in Israel had grown from less than 5,000 a decade earlier to more than 40,000 currently - nearly 0.8 per cent of the population.

63. "Narcoterrorism" was a word used by those involved in the combat against drugs. The classic definition of that term was the distribution of drugs for the purpose of achieving political ends. The drug industry in Lebanon contributed substantially to the financing of terrorist organizations under

(Mr. Mor, Israel)

Syrian control and of Palestinian terrorist groups. Organizations under Syrian protection maintained a presence in the Bekaa Valley and along the smuggling routes of Lebanon. Among those organizations were the Palestinian splinter group Al-Sa'iqah and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine - General Command, under Ahmed Jibril. According to certain sources, Palestinian terrorist organizations were linked to Lebanese narcoterrorist organizations.

64. His Government called upon the Governments of Syria and Lebanon to do their utmost to fight the menace of illicit drug trafficking and terrorism. Needless to say, Israel was doing its best to curb the smuggling and trafficking of drugs from Lebanon across its borders and shores. Still, it could not meet the challenge alone; Israel was therefore ready to cooperate with countries in and outside its region in combating the abuse of and trafficking in illicit drugs and psychotropic substances. It had demonstrated its readiness on numerous occasions. Unfortunately, certain countries in the region, Syria among them, continued to refuse to recognize the State of Israel or to maintain relations with it. That attitude was undermining the current peace process and regional efforts to fight the plague of drugs.

65. At the national level, the Israeli Government had tackled drug abuse and illicit trafficking on several fronts, particularly in the fields of prevention and treatment and education of the public. At the international level, Israel was a party to the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 and its amending Protocol, and had taken all the steps necessary for implementation. It had also signed the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances and had taken steps to bring domestic legislation into line with the Convention, in particular in respect of confiscation of the proceeds of drug trafficking, and money-laundering.

66. In 1987, the Government of Israel had adopted a resolution giving the problem priority and proposing the establishment of a national anti-drug authority. The authority's mandate included formulating nation-wide policies for prevention and suppression of drug abuse and illicit trafficking and for treatment and rehabilitation of drug addicts. It also included expanding programmes for disseminating information on the dangers of drug consumption and coordinating the efforts of all Israel's governmental, non-governmental and public agencies dealing with the issue.

67. With the growing prospect of peace in the Middle East, his delegation stressed that there could not be genuine peace between different societies unless obstacles like traffic in drugs and psychotropic substances were tackled on a unified front, and that Israel was prepared to set aside political differences and concert its efforts with other countries to confront the drug scourge. Israel supported the creation of UNIDCP and offered full cooperation in its activities.

68. Mr. TROTTIER (Canada) referred to the work of the Chemical Action Task Force, in which Canada had taken an active part, and whose main function was to prevent the diversion of chemical substances into the manufacture of illicit drugs. The Task Force had been initiated by the Group of Seven industrialized countries, but a number of other countries associated with the Group had taken part in its work. Canada looked forward to discussing the Task Force's recommendations at the next session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

69. With regard to drug-control activities at the national level, Canada's first five-year national drug strategy was nearing its end. The strategy was a multi-faceted effort to reduce the harm caused by alcohol and other drugs to individuals and families. It enjoyed the participation of all levels of government, business, law-enforcement agencies, and professional and voluntary organizations. With a view to better coordination of federal and international activities, the Government had set up a drug-strategy secretariat. There had been a gradual decline in the use of most drugs in Canada, although tempered by the fact that the drugs used today were stronger.

70. At the international level, Canada's active participation in United Nations drug-control activities reflected its recognition that no country could "go it alone".

71. Regarding the Secretary-General's report on measures to implement General Assembly resolution 45/179 (A/46/480), his delegation regretted the late issuance of that document, which did little more than repeat most of what the Executive Director of UNIDCP had made public in Vienna in September 1991. He noted document A/C.5/46/23, which contained specific details on administrative, financial and personnel arrangements and on the draft financial rules for the new Voluntary Fund of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme. In his opinion, while the presentation of information in two separate documents might accord with United Nations rules, it left the Third Committee to review only a limited part of the picture.

72. His delegation was prepared to give the new United Nations drug-control structure general support, but wished to see how it worked out in practice. In his opinion, UNIDCP should be kept as transparent as possible and should try to avoid duplication. It would also like financial information on the working of the Fund, which would be particularly important if there was to be a pledging conference.

73. Mr. SOTO GARCIA (Cuba) referred to paragraph 35 of the Secretary-General's report (A/46/480), which emphasized such concepts as shared responsibility and synchronization of strategies. Shared responsibility meant that each and every member of the international community had the duty to face the problems of cultivation, production, trafficking in and consumption of drugs, as well as money-laundering and trading in precursor chemicals. Synchronization meant simultaneous efforts by all countries to resolve the problem.

(Mr. Soto Garcia, Cuba)

74. Strategies carried out so far had been based primarily on prohibition, enforcement and the military solution. That was a limited approach. Elimination of crops, destruction of laboratories and capture of gangs or cartels would not resolve the problem unless carried out on a broad geographical front. If drugs such as marijuana, cocaine, opium and heroin disappeared but the causes remained, other natural and synthetic drugs would appear in order to satisfy the demand.

75. Publicity campaigns to prevent or reduce illegal demand and to promote rehabilitation of drug addicts would be counter-productive if they entailed reductions in funds for education, medical care and social assistance and, as a result, increased unemployment, hunger and poverty. That showed the need for global strategies: unless the drug problem was linked with underdevelopment, there would be no real progress towards a solution.

76. Also, the problem of illicit drug consumption must be linked with the current world ethical and moral crisis. Any solution must recognize the roots of the problem and understand its nature. His delegation supported the view that the extra funds required to combat drugs should not be taken from development programmes for the poor countries. Rather, the resources generated by demilitarization of the countries possessing large arsenals, which should be possible in the current "mono-polar" world, should be used for that purpose.

77. His delegation considered that the fight against drug production, trafficking and consumption should in no way be used as a pretext for violating the principles of the United Nations Charter or the principles of international law, as in the case of the United States invasion of Panama.

78. Cuba's position at the centre of major drug-trafficking routes between Latin America and the United States placed it in an extremely delicate situation. However, there was no drug cultivation, production, trafficking or consumption on Cuban territory. The Government of Cuba had shown great vigour and efficiency in dealing with the problem. The tons of drugs destroyed, the ships and aircraft seized and the hundreds of drug traffickers detained and punished spoke for themselves. Cuba had recently signed bilateral agreements with most of its neighbours and was studying the possibility of entering into new agreements with other countries.

79. Mr. STOVALL III (Federated States of Micronesia), speaking on behalf of the nine members of the South Pacific Forum which were also Members of the United Nations (Australia, Fiji, the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu), said that the Forum shared the sense of urgency that had been evident in other statements on the item. Although, fortunately, the dimensions of the problem in the countries of the Forum was not yet overwhelming, the region, with its great expanse of ocean and its economically vulnerable island States, was prey to drug traffickers who used small island

(Mr. Stovall III, Federated States of Micronesia)

nations as staging posts to link the major sources of supply in Asia and Latin America to the big European and American markets. That special vulnerability suggested that international anti-drug efforts should be directed increasingly to the South Pacific region.

80. At the 22nd meeting of the South Pacific Forum, held in July 1991 in Pohnpei (Federated States of Micronesia), Forum Governments had renewed their commitment to cooperate in combating drug abuse and trafficking. They had also expressed support for proposals to increase the resources of regional organizations combating the problem and to develop the capacity of its member States to address law-enforcement problems associated with drugs. A close liaison had been established between the police and customs departments of the Forum countries. Just a week previously a meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies (HONLEA) had been held in Canberra (Australia). There had been annual customs-enforcement conferences and Asian regional conferences of INTERPOL. The annual session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific was another forum where the countries of the region discussed cooperative approaches to combating drugs.

81. International and regional cooperation were both crucial to the success of drug-control efforts. The Forum countries were pleased that the United Nations had been giving increasing attention to the question. They approved the establishment of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNIDCP) and welcomed the increased policy guidance and monitoring role assigned to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. As pointed out by its Executive Director, UNIDCP would have to assert itself through the strength of its ideas.

82. He regretted that the States members of the South Pacific Forum had not had time to study the new ideas contained in document A/46/480; many of the members, particularly the smallest of the Pacific island countries, did not have the resources to consider such documents within 24 hours or even a few days. It was important not to put up barriers to a participation in that important effort of any State, regardless of how small or remote it seemed.

83. One aspect of the global problem that must be taken into account was geographical in nature. It was useless to clamp down on one trafficking route if others were left open. The Forum countries therefore hoped that UNIDCP would address the South Pacific region more actively as it set about establishing itself as a focal point for a world-wide drug-control strategy, and in that context, they were pleased that the Programme would fund a training course on the suppression of illicit drug trafficking, to be held in Pago Pago in February/March 1992 under the auspices of the Conference of the South Pacific Chiefs of Police.

84. With regard to drug consumption, the problem was not confined to narcotic and psychotropic substances. The abuse of solvents, which were not

(Mr. Stovall III, Federated States of Micronesia)

necessarily prohibited by law, as well as of tobacco and alcohol, must also be taken into account. The lack of economic well-being was also a major factor in the drug problem. The poor and dispossessed sometimes turned to drugs for comfort or for money. That vicious circle must be dealt with at all levels. For example, efforts had been made to carry out crop-substitution programmes in South America; but without changes at the macroeconomic level, such programmes had little chance for success. Improved returns for agricultural exports would act as a disincentive for illicit drug-crop cultivation.

85. Mr. Jong Moo CHOI (Republic of Korea) said that his delegation had high expectations for the activities of UNIDCP, whose new integrated structure held out the prospect of an effective campaign against the problem. The Programme's intention to strengthen its field network also deserved attention.

86. In the view of his delegation, every State must sustain its drug-control efforts in order to create a continuing process world wide. The natural tendency for a country to ease its drug-control campaign following temporary improvement had adverse results; the threat of drugs could never be fully eradicated. Efforts must be coordinated among all members of the international community, and multilateral and bilateral initiatives should conform to an agreed strategy in which UNIDCP acted as coordinator and sponsor. Such problems as money-laundering should be tackled at the international level.

87. Drug abuse should be considered not solely as a crime, but as a social phenomenon that could be prevented by strengthening the role of the community and religious, educational and family institutions. By involving those segments of society in the campaign against drug abuse, it might be possible to counteract the emotional and psychological forces that prompted the individual to fall into the abyss of drug addiction. Many countries had developed prevention programmes with civic and community groups, and others had incorporated drug education into school curricula with parent participation.

88. The world community must give greater attention to reducing demand. International efforts had mainly targeted drug supply and production, which had proved costly and ineffective. His delegation was therefore encouraged that UNIDCP had given priority to national demand-reduction projects, particularly in the field of preventive education.

89. His Government considered that education and the media constituted two powerful channels for awakening public awareness. In that context, it welcomed Economic and Social Council resolution 1991/46, which encouraged Governments with appropriate expertise to consider establishing mechanisms to share with interested States knowledge on the development and evaluation of demand-reduction strategies. Recognizing the importance of international

(Mr. Jong Moo Choi,
Republic of Korea)

cooperation in that field, the Republic of Korea had strengthened its bilateral and regional contacts with neighbouring countries. Since 1989, the authorities had organized a quarterly meeting of liaison officials of embassies in Seoul and had programmed an annual cooperation meeting with Japan. He was pleased to announce that, in October 1993, the Republic of Korea would host the 18th meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies (HONLEA) for Asia and the Pacific.

90. Mrs. RAOELINA (Madagascar) welcomed the establishment of UNIDCP and took note with interest of the Secretary-General's report on measures taken to implement General Assembly resolution 45/179 on the enhancement of the United Nations structure for drug-abuse control (A/46/480). If the Programme was to carry out its work effectively, the necessary financial and human resources must be made available.

91. Although its drug problems had not yet reached serious proportions, Madagascar had acceded to the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, was a party to earlier agreements on combating drug abuse and was a member of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. It had also adopted a number of measures with the help of the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control (UNFDAC) and France. It had been a sponsor of three resolutions on demand for and supply of opiates for medical and scientific needs, on the prevention of diversion from international trade into illicit channels of psychtropic substances listed in Schedules III and IV of the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971, and on implementation of the International Drug Abuse Assessment System.

92. His delegation reaffirmed its support for the meetings of the Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies (HONLEA) and welcomed the information provided by United Nations organs and specialized agencies in document A/46/511, which highlighted the difficulties that Africa was encountering in connection with the lack of financial resources, the lack of materials and infrastructure and the poor coordination of activities. In that context, Madagascar had requested the assistance of UNFDAC in the area of prevention, particularly with regard to the training of experts and the purchase of various types of equipment.

93. If the world strategy to combat drug abuse and illicit trafficking was to be implemented, a concerted world-wide focus must be adopted. The United Nations was an ideal instrument for playing the role of catalyst in those activities.

The meeting rose at 5.45 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SIXTH SESSION

Official Records

THIRD COMMITTEE
34th meeting
held on
Thursday, 7 November 1991
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 34th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. AL-SHAALI (United Arab Emirates)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 96: NARCOTIC DRUGS (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 97: REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES, QUESTIONS RELATING TO REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS AND HUMANITARIAN QUESTIONS

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 96: NARCOTIC DRUGS (continued) (A/46/3 (chap. VI, sect. E), A/46/222, 264, 336, 338, 480, 511; A/C.5/46/23)

1. Ms. LISSIDINI (Uruguay) said that illicit drug trafficking and its negative economic and social effects had grown alarmingly in recent years, but the international community had significantly improved its response at the same time. After years of mutual accusations, drug-producing and consuming countries had finally accepted the principle of shared responsibility. That acceptance had facilitated international cooperation, and should continue to be a basis for action. It was also encouraging to note the progress achieved in international regulation, through instruments such as the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, the Political Declaration of the seventeenth special session of the General Assembly, and most recently, the establishment of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNIDCP). Her country had undertaken procedures for ratifying the 1988 Convention, and had also participated in several regional and subregional programmes.

2. Economics must be recognized among the underlying causes of illicit narcotic production. The necessary conditions must be established to make other crops profitable for farmers. Many of the economic factors involved, however, were external to the producer countries. Social risk factors must also be explored in order to reverse tendencies towards self-destructive behaviour, especially among young people. Neither repression nor treatment alone would successfully address the problem as a whole.

3. Uruguay was not a drug-producing country, but consumption and trafficking were increasing, especially among youth. There had been indications that traffickers were re-routing their operations into Uruguayan territory since their traditional routes had been disrupted. In response, her Government had established a national drug-abuse prevention and control board, and had begun a massive education campaign aimed mainly at high-school students. Furthermore, it was taking steps to prevent its banking system from being used for money-laundering.

4. Ms. MBELLA NGOMBA (Cameroon) said that her country, which was situated within a new transit zone for illegal drug trafficking, was beginning to experience the destructive consequences of the drug phenomenon. Drug abuse among young people and rising unemployment due to the global economic recession had brought about an increase in crime in Cameroon. In April 1990, her Government had hosted a regional conference on illicit drugs. The conference had focused on curtailing illicit drug activities through tighter border controls, increased national awareness of the dangers of drug abuse, training of more law-enforcement officers, and enhanced cooperation at the regional and international level.

(Ms. Mbella Ngomba, Cameroon)

5. Cameroon and its central African neighbours had joint commissions to ensure the enforcement of immigration and customs laws. Her country hoped to expand the work of those commissions to include collaboration in the detection and curtailment of drug trafficking and to enact regional legislation on the treatment and rehabilitation of drug addicts. Cameroon had recently ratified the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances and fully supported its provisions. In view of the broad scope of the Convention and the other legal instruments in the field, her delegation believed that efforts should focus on full implementation of existing drug-control agreements, particularly the 1988 Convention, instead of drawing up new ones.

6. In the discussion of the Secretary-General's report on measures to enhance the United Nations structure for drug-abuse control (A/46/480), a number of delegations had raised pertinent questions concerning the proper implementation of programmes, adequate financing and personnel. Her delegation believed that those issues should be considered in the Fifth Committee. Furthermore, recruitment to UNIDCP should be based on the principle of equitable geographical distribution. With regard to the redeployment of resources to meet the additional need for personnel, her delegation pointed out that the General Assembly could assess those requirements only after the preliminary execution and evaluation of the operational activities of the Programme. Lastly, she stressed the need to increase technical cooperation to assist developing countries in devising and implementing demand-reduction programmes as a major priority of the Programme. That approach, coupled with the promotion of agricultural exports from developing countries, would help to eliminate the drug cartels.

7. Mrs. BRUGGEMANN (World Health Organization) said that drug abuse was one of the serious public health problems of the century and was increasingly affecting wider segments of societies in many countries throughout the world. In its programme on substance abuse, WHO focused on promoting lifestyles that were free from substance abuse, controlled use of legal psychoactive substances for medical care, treatment and rehabilitation of drug abusers, support for national programmes, and research and development to find solutions to drug-related problems. Her organization sought to encourage the safe and rational use of licit psychotropic medicines by providing relevant information on prescription practices and would continue to assess the therapeutic usefulness of substances as well as the seriousness of resulting public health and social problems.

8. As of 1990, WHO had studied over 400 substances in its effort to respond promptly to the changing patterns of drug abuse and the marketing of new psychoactive drugs, and had made recommendations for updating the list of controlled substances compiled by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

9. WHO was stimulating a global effort to reduce demand for illicit drugs by promoting national drug demand-reduction plans and conducting joint missions

(Mrs. Bruggemann, WHO)

with UNIDCP. Data were being collected on the health impact of the abuse of both illicit and licit drugs through the Abuse Trends Linkage Assessment System (ATLAS).

10. In the area of treating, rehabilitating and reintegrating drug addicts, WHO had developed a system to help health authorities to assess the quality of care in drug-abuse treatment and to identify areas needing improvement.

11. The abuse of injectable drugs played a major role in the spread of HIV infection. WHO was collaborating through its Global Programme on AIDS to develop ways of reducing drug abuse in order to curb the AIDS epidemic. It was also collaborating with United Nations drug-control bodies and specialized agencies in developing innovative programmes to reach street children, elaborating model programmes for alcohol- and drug-abuse prevention and strengthening links with non-governmental organizations.

12. The global trading of both licit and illicit substances that could be abused had led to a worsening of the drug problem in many of the world's poorest countries. All trading partners must seriously discuss the illicit drug trade, legal drug transactions and health issues. In particular, WHO sought to make narcotic-producing countries more aware of the harmful effects of substance abuse within their own borders.

13. Mr. AL HUSNI (United Arab Emirates) said that drug abuse and illicit traffic was a basic problem that all countries without exception must address because it exposed individuals and families in all societies to the gravest harm. All States should therefore support United Nations efforts and should accede to the relevant international instruments.

14. His country had ratified the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, as amended by the 1972 Protocol, and the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances and had acceded to the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. It had also enacted a law against narcotic substances and the like with a view to eliminating the sources of the problem and providing treatment to addicts. For illicit traffic in drugs, the law required the death penalty, life imprisonment or imprisonment for a period of not less than 10 years. Only the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of the Interior were authorized to import and distribute medication, and that prevented the diversion of narcotic drugs from the licit trade. The States members of the Gulf Cooperation Council had elaborated a comprehensive strategy to fight drugs and had established an educational programme for the purpose of increasing awareness of the dangers of addiction.

15. The developing countries had made strenuous efforts to combat illicit drug traffic, and the consumer countries must make similar efforts to reduce demand. The burden of responsibility was on the industrialized countries, as the major consumer countries, and they also had the necessary resources to put

(Mr. Al Husni, United Arab Emirates)

an end to the illicit drug trade. The drug-producing countries must be helped to eliminate production and to find alternative marketable crops. In order to prevent their economic collapse, the international community must provide technical, economic and financial assistance to promote development in the producer countries and combat trafficking in transit countries. A global solution must be found to the problems of poverty and underdevelopment, and effective measures to that end must be taken by the industrialized countries.

16. It was the view of his delegation that the problem could be solved by allocating increased financial resources to plans and projects to combat illicit drugs, and the United Nations, as the major focus for coordination, should train experts, promote awareness and establish the necessary administrative and legal framework.

17. Mr. GIACOMELLI (Executive Director, United Nations International Drug Control Programme) said that it was gratifying to note the commitment expressed by all speakers to the fight against all aspects of drug abuse and illicit trafficking. The many valuable suggestions and observations made by delegations would be taken into account in the future work of the Programme. It had been gratifying to hear about the measures taken by a number of countries in order to ratify the international drug-control conventions, particularly the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. Significant progress could be achieved only through universal application of that Convention. In that connection, he once again underscored the willingness and ability of UNIDCP to assist all countries, at their request, by providing expert advice. The Programme's structure was not immutable. Its functioning would be evaluated in the near future to determine whether it worked as well as expected. The true test would be whether UNIDCP could deliver better the services that it was mandated to carry out.

18. The control of precursors and essential chemicals used in illicit drug manufacture was one of the main features of the 1988 Convention. The Convention specified that the United Nations, in particular the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB), should recommend to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs that such substances which were not yet under control but in which there was trafficking, should be brought under control. The Board would hold a special session early in 1992 to consider a number of such substances for recommendation to the Commission. The Programme had a special unit which worked full time in that field. In addition, the Technical Services Division also provided assistance in analysing precursors and essential chemicals. Thus, the Programme was fully carrying out its mandate in that regard.

19. The mandate of UNIDCP with respect to the fight against money-laundering was based on the Global Programme of Action. The Technical Services Division had a financial analyst who would promote exchanges of information between Governments and regulatory or investigative agencies on the financial flow of illicit drug proceeds and develop a repository of laws and regulations on

(Mr. Giacomelli)

money-laundering, currency reporting, bank secrecy and confiscation. Requests for technical cooperation to combat money-laundering would be considered favourably. If the General Assembly wished UNIDCP to do more in that field, it might wish to consider enlarging its mandate.

20. Some countries had expressed the view that seized proceeds from drug trafficking should be made available to the Programme. Under the 1988 Convention, a party might give special consideration to concluding agreements on contributing seized proceeds and property to intergovernmental bodies specializing in the fight against illegal drug trafficking and drug abuse. It was therefore for Member States to consider that possibility. The Programme, for its part, would be glad to accept such contributions, which could significantly assist its technical cooperation activities.

21. INCB dealt with the question of the supply of and demand for opiates for legitimate purposes. The Board would receive from the Programme, particularly the Technical Services Division, the assistance it required, should that prove necessary. There seemed to be some misunderstanding as to the role of the Programme concerning policy-making organs. The Policy Planning and Evaluation Unit would have the task of drawing up plans, under his supervision, for the Programme itself. Once formulated, those plans would of course be submitted through the Commission on Narcotic Drugs to the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. Lastly, he said that the discussion of the item had demonstrated the very high priority given by Member States to drug-related problems and the greater awareness of need for a global approach.

22. Mr. JAAFARI (Syrian Arab Republic), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that most members of the Committee had no doubt heard the statement made by the representative of Israel at the Committee's 33rd meeting with astonishment and had reacted with sorrow to the unwarranted provocation that it had constituted and to its irresponsible conflation of the illicit drug problem from which mankind as a whole was suffering and other, purely political issues that had no relation to the matter under discussion. While all others had focused on the importance of addressing a painful issue in a serious manner, the Israeli representative had violated the propriety that others were trying to observe in the work of the Committee in order to launch a fresh provocation aimed at harming Syria's international reputation as a major negotiating partner attempting to establish peace and at thwarting the rare opportunity that currently presented itself to reach a just, comprehensive and durable peace in the Middle East.

23. All would be able to recall how such provocation had begun on the eve of the Madrid peace conference, when the Israelis had proceeded to occupy the houses of Palestinian inhabitants of occupied East Jerusalem, and how such provocation had continued during the Madrid conference, when the Israelis had established a new settlement in the occupied Syrian Golan and had declared their resolve to double the number of settlers in occupied Syrian territory within one year. Was it possible to hope that the intervention of the Israeli

(Mr. Jaafari, Syrian Arab Republic)

representative reflected the final stages of that disease of extremism that met with the disapprobation of the civilized and peaceful world that all, in recent days, were hoping to create?

24. There had been consensus among speakers that the illicit drug problem was of universal scope and that it stopped at no borders, inasmuch as networks of an international mafia were in place in many parts of the world. Syria had always sought to strengthen and unite international efforts to combat the problem, and it acted in coordination with the relevant international agencies and exchanged information with them. With other Arab countries, it had participated actively in elaborating a model standard inter-Arab law on drugs and an inter-Arab strategy to combat the illicit use of drugs, both of which had been adopted by the Arab Ministers of the Interior in 1986. It had for long been holding discussions on the drug problem with INTERPOL, to mention only the meeting held at Damascus on 26 October 1991 by drug control bureaux, international liaison officers resident in Cyprus and the representative of INTERPOL at which participants had commended the destruction by the Syrian authorities of shipments in transit. There were also the reports sent by Damascus to the United Nations and to INTERPOL in the detection field and exchanges of information and expertise. Experts had called attention to the importance of that information in enabling the authorities in other countries to seize large quantities of hashish and other narcotic substances.

25. Members of the Committee should also recall, on the other hand, the astonishing conclusions reached by international investigators following the breakup of drug rings in certain Latin American countries, when it had become known that the advisers to the leaders of the Medellín cartel had been Israeli officers operating on behalf of the Israeli Mossad. The same officers had trained death squads working for the drug mafia in Colombia which, in August 1988, had assassinated one of the leading candidates for the presidency of that country.

26. Israel was, with malice, putting forward the theme of cooperation with the Arabs in combating drugs and in other fields while ignoring the need of first achieving peace and returning the Arab territories. In practice, Israel sought to cooperate with the Arabs in all matters other than that of a just and comprehensive peace based on the "land for peace" principle. When, however, Syria appealed to international legitimacy and to consensus resolutions on the establishment of peace, it became transformed, in the Israeli view, into a drug trafficker, an exporter of terrorism and an anti-Semitic country. It was not unlikely that the Israelis would one day call for its removal from the face of the earth because it insisted on the restoration of its usurped rights and its occupied territory. Since a mechanism for a just, comprehensive and durable peace in the Middle East had began to take shape under the auspices of the United States and the Soviet Union, Israel had become afflicted by "cartographic colour-blindness" and there had been a dangerous increase in the inhuman antipathy of its representatives towards a Syrian negotiating partner striving for a just and

(Mr. Jaafari, Syrian Arab Republic)

comprehensive peace. The statement made by the representative of Israel had been one of an extremist and provocative political character and had had no relation to the fight against drugs.

27. Mr. BITAR (Lebanon), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the Israeli delegation had continued its practice of systematically attacking Lebanon in the Third Committee. It was well known that during the 16-year war in Lebanon, Israel had played a major role in destabilizing the Government and undermining every attempt at national reconciliation. In the chaos of war, hashish-growing had flourished in some parts of Lebanon. Since the re-establishment of the rule of law, however, Lebanon had done its utmost to combat the production and trafficking of illicit drugs. It had made considerable progress over the past year, even though Israeli authorities had condoned the smuggling of illicit drugs through southern Lebanon towards Israel. His Government would continue its fight to make Lebanon a drug-free society.

28. Mr. MONTAÑO (Mexico), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that he fully agreed with the Executive Director's viewpoint on the new United Nations drug-control structure and that the efforts made in establishing that structure were commendable. In its report to the Secretary-General (A/45/652/Add.1), the Group of Experts had stressed its belief in the feasibility of enhancing the effectiveness of United Nations drug-control activities without increasing resources. If all countries gave the new Programme sufficient time and support, it would undoubtedly prove successful. He requested the Executive Director to have the text of his closing statement circulated as a working paper of the Third Committee.

AGENDA ITEM 97: REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES, QUESTIONS RELATING TO REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS AND HUMANITARIAN QUESTIONS (A/46/3, chap. VII, sect. H and Add.1, A/46/12 and Add.1, A/46/134 and Corr.1, A/46/139, A/46/323-S/22836, A/46/344, 371, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 471, A/46/501/Rev.1, A/46/568 and 612)

29. Mrs. OGATA (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) said that the two main functions of her office, as mandated by the General Assembly, were to provide international protection to refugees and to seek durable solutions. The success of those endeavours depended on full recognition of the High Commissioner as the spokesperson for the international community's universal, non-political, humanitarian concern for refugees.

30. The activities of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) had spread to all parts of the world. The majority of the world's current refugee population of 17 million were in the South, where a number of poor countries had generously received them. In addition, Eastern Europe had evolved from a source of refugees into a sanctuary for them. The recent accession of Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland to the United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees bore witness to the region's

(Mrs. Ogata)

growing involvement in the work of UNHCR. Those developments, together with increased participation in the work of UNHCR by all Member States in connection with the end of the cold war, created the best prospects to date for finding lasting solutions to refugee problems. Global changes, however, also presented new challenges through the re-emergence of ethnic and national tensions.

31. The perils and promises of the current world situation called for a three-point strategy focusing on prevention, emergency response and lasting solutions. Refugee movements should be prevented by the elimination or mitigation of factors potentially prompting them. The identification and analysis of those factors, in turn, was the first step towards lasting solutions. In the coming decade, political liberalization and economic disparity would probably be the strongest influences on population movements. Although UNHCR had not been specifically empowered to address all those issues, it could not afford to be inflexible in its approach.

32. UNHCR had demonstrated its flexibility in Viet Nam and Albania, where the causes of refugee problems had shifted from political persecution and repression to economic hardship. Operations in those countries therefore concentrated on the provision of economic, humanitarian and legal assistance, in cooperation with other international organizations. In Yugoslavia and northern Iraq, internally displaced persons and returnees received priority attention. Efforts in those countries focused on both immediate humanitarian aid and the creation of conditions favourable to long-term resettlement.

33. Mechanisms to address the plight of the internally displaced must be an important component of prevention strategy. In addition, the principle of national sovereignty must be reconciled with that of humanitarian access to the internally displaced, and must not become a barrier to appropriate international action. UNHCR would draw on its experience in negotiating agreements with all parties concerned in order to tackle the problem, which was one of its greatest current and future challenges.

34. During 1991, the international community had been confronted with some of the greatest humanitarian emergencies of recent times, and UNHCR had drawn many lessons from its involvement in those operations. There had been strong support for the proposed emergency preparedness and response mechanism. Large-scale and complex disasters such as those in the Persian Gulf and the Horn of Africa required concerted action beyond the capacity of any single Government or international agency. In addition to material means of response, effective coordination and cooperation were also required. Any coordination mechanism should facilitate joint action rather than add a bureaucratic layer of control and it should not include operational responsibilities.

(Mrs. Ogata)

35. Voluntary repatriation was the most desirable solution to overcrowded camps and dismal conditions. The right to return to one's country must be given as much emphasis as the right to seek asylum abroad. New prospects for peace in many areas of the world had improved the outlook for significant voluntary repatriation in 1992. It must be accompanied, however, by efforts to create proper conditions for reintegration as part of the national development effort.

36. Many refugees were returning to areas still affected by conflict. Even in such circumstances, UNHCR's non-political and humanitarian role must be accepted by the local government and the security of its staff and operational partners must be guaranteed. Removal of mines was a specific problem which posed a formidable obstacle to return of refugees, and which UNHCR had neither the political nor the technical capacity to address.

37. A strategy aimed at achieving solutions while responding to emergencies was costly, but the current year had seen unprecedented needs and unprecedented response. She was deeply thankful for the support of both donors and countries of asylum.

38. The mission of a non-political organization such as UNHCR must be to contribute to peace and reconciliation through pursuit of lasting humanitarian solutions. The opportunities for preventing and resolving refugee problems had never been greater.

39. Mr. JONAH (Under-Secretary-General for Special Political Questions, Regional Cooperation, Decolonization and Trusteeship) said that the Secretary-General's report on the International Conference on the Plight of Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons in Southern Africa (A/46/371) had been prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 45/137, which called upon the international community to increase its assistance to the countries of southern Africa and reaffirmed the need to continue implementing the Oslo Declaration and Plan of Action on the Plight of Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons in Southern Africa adopted by the Conference (A/43/717 and Corr.1 and Add.1). The Oslo Declaration focused on the humanitarian problems and their root causes in southern Africa, where some 4.5 million persons had been identified as refugees, returnees or displaced persons. It noted that additional resources were needed for urgent relief, particularly for internally displaced persons, and emphasized the link between relief, recovery and development assistance to promote self-sufficiency. It also reaffirmed the principles of solidarity, burden-sharing and global responsibility.

40. The Plan of Action identified four areas as best suited for effective action: emergency preparedness, needs assessment and delivery of assistance, recovery and development, and mobilization of resources. Document A/46/371 described the action undertaken by Member States and agencies in the United Nations system in response to the Oslo Declaration and Plan of Action.

41. The report of the Secretary-General on assistance to refugees in Somalia (A/46/471), prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 45/154, focused on refugees in the north-western districts of Somalia. Developments in Somalia and neighbouring countries since the adoption of the resolution had changed the nature and distribution of refugees in the Horn of Africa. Many of the refugees in Somalia had returned to their countries of origin and many Somalis had fled to neighbouring countries. Given the regional character of those population movements, programmes for all the countries involved had been made the subject of a consolidated inter-agency appeal by the new Special Emergency Programme for the Horn of Africa. The Secretary-General had convened a special donors' meeting in September appealing for international assistance in support of the Special Programme.

42. Mr. van der HEIJDEN (Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the European Community and its 12 member States, said that what had seemed a finite post-war European problem at the time of the establishment of the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees and the adoption of the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, 40 years back, had become a phenomenon of unprecedented dimensions. According to UNHCR statistics, there were approximately 17 million refugees seeking international protection outside their country of origin and a comparable number of displaced persons who had left their homes, without necessarily crossing national borders, and were outside current protection regimes. Refugee and migratory flows were becoming increasingly entangled but most migrants could not claim refugee status under the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol, which the Twelve still regarded as the principal instruments offering international protection to refugees.

43. More attention must be paid to the protection and physical well-being of internally and externally displaced persons, the social and economic root causes of massive outflows and the effects of migratory movements on countries of origin and reception. The changed structure and size of the Office of the High Commissioner reflected the changed dimension of the refugee problem. In the current year, the Office's budgetary requirements had risen to a record level of almost $1 billion, mainly due to the large migrations of people in the Persian Gulf and the Horn of Africa. The European Community and its member States constituted the Office's largest donor, having provided $283 million between January and September 1991.

44. Despite the bleak outlook, there were some encouraging signs. Most of the 1.5 million Iraqi refugees had returned home; the High Commissioner had signed an agreement with the Government of South Africa on the repatriation of South African exiles and repatriation was due to start in the near future; the Cambodian scheme for voluntary repatriation, with UNHCR as the designated lead agency, was to be implemented following the signature of a political agreement in October.

(Mr. van der Heijden, Netherlands)

45. The overall refugee situation was not static and the Office must be capable of reacting quickly to events; it must be prepared to make choices and set priorities on the basis of assessed humanitarian needs. In her opening statement to the Executive Committee at its forty-second session, the High Commissioner had outlined three major objectives: strengthening the Office's emergency preparedness and response mechanisms; promoting voluntary repatriation; and promoting durable solutions through preventive measures.

46. With regard to the first objective, the number of emergencies had increased dramatically in 1991, leading to unprecedented loss of life, devastation and massive uprooting, and the burden on recipient countries, international organizations and donors pointed to the need to strengthen the United Nations emergency response capacity. The Twelve had introduced proposals earlier in the current General Assembly session, emphasizing the need for effective central leadership, better coordination machinery, an emergency fund to permit immediate response, and an inventory of human and material resources available in the United Nations framework and in States and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. The Twelve welcomed the High Commissioner's proposals for strengthening the Office's emergency response capacity and improving the quality of its contribution to the United Nations system-wide response to emergency situations. They stressed the importance of inter-agency cooperation and system-wide coordination, and they urged the High Commissioner to make information on her emergency management capacity easily accessible and to include it in the proposed inventory, so as to achieve full exchange of information and avoid duplication.

47. Regarding the second objective, the Twelve agreed that 1992 should be the year of voluntary repatriation. That called for States' accepting responsibility by allowing nationals to return home and settle in society, effective counselling and well-planned and executed operations. Where programmes extended beyond the capacity and mandate of the High Commissioner and were dealt with on a case-by-case basis, cooperation with development agencies was crucial.

48. The Twelve supported the Office's efforts to find durable solutions, but noted that only 13.5 per cent of the Office's total expenditure on assistance was for voluntary repatriation, compared with nearly 60 per cent for care and maintenance. In a rapidly changing world, opportunities must not be missed through lack of preparedness or funds, and they welcomed the Executive Committee's decision to explore a range of options for dealing with that problem. With regard to the related question of people who were found not to be refugees but who nevertheless did not opt for voluntary repatriation, the removal of rejected applicants was a matter of discretion for individual States in accordance with their national laws. The Twelve welcomed the Office's efforts to assist such people by seeking guarantees from countries of origin for their return in safety and dignity.

(Mr. van der Heijden, Netherlands)

49. Regarding the third objective, preventive measures would remove the root causes of refugee flows and to that end it was necessary to understand why people had fled their homes. Refugee flows, which were the result of human rights violations, foreign invasion and internal conflicts, differed from migratory flows in search of a better life. The problem of causes, however, was beyond the High Commissioner's mandate, since it involved resolution of conflicts and protection of human rights, on the one hand, and economic development, on the other, although the Office could perhaps act as a catalyst or an early warning system. The Twelve welcomed the idea of preventive action by the Office and individual countries through cooperation with human rights bodies, mass information campaigns and the development of a "country of origin" database.

50. The Right Reverend Monsignor DUPUY (Observer for the Holy See) said that, despite some encouraging events recently, as in Cambodia, the refugee problem was increasing. The new migratory exodus was a source of direct concern to many Governments, since it reduced the possibility of resettling refugees who had waited for years in countries of first asylum.

51. The Holy See was aware of the restrictions that a narrow definition of "refugee" would impose on a global plan of action for the growing number of displaced persons, but the criteria used in official documents to define refugees were no longer adequate and failed to respond to new situations.

52. Pope John Paul II had spoken of human beings migrating, not from free choice but under pressure of hunger and sub-human conditions, or to escape persecution for their political or religious convictions; the representative of Malta had spoken of "hunger refugees"; and the Australian representative had stressed the need to assist displaced persons as well as refugees. The United Nations, Governments and non-governmental organizations must join without delay in seeking just and generous ways of dealing with all refugees and displaced persons, and countries of departure and reception must be helped in removing the causes of exodus, ensuring the fundamental rights of new arrivals as well as of their own citizens, and creating conditions for just resettlement or voluntary repatriation.

53. Every year, the Holy See made symbolic contributions to the activities of the Office of the High Commissioner and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. It also supported voluntary workers and agencies in every country where refugees and displaced persons sought asylum and/or resettlement. He appealed to all countries to assist the Vietnamese refugees, who had said that they would die rather than be subjected to forced repatriation.

54. Mr. DJIMRANGAR (Chad) said that, since the iron curtain had fallen and States had no further need to spend huge sums on the arms race, the international community should pay greater attention to the economic, social and humanitarian problems of the poorest countries. The effects of the current economic crisis on those countries were heightened by armed conflicts and natural disasters, which had led to major movements of refugees and displaced persons. Chad had gone through several years of war and was currently suffering from drought, floods and a cholera epidemic, which had caused thousands of dead and homeless.

55. His Government was greatly concerned about the situation of its refugees. The restoration of democracy, political pluralism and the rule of law in Chad had given new confidence to Chadians in exile, and thousands had returned home without assistance from UNHCR. Since the beginning of 1991, a total of 860,000 persons had returned to Chad from camps in neighbouring countries. His country was among the poorest on earth, and lacked resources and infrastructure to accommodate them. There was an immediate need for housing, rehabilitation of health-care infrastructure, agricultural supplies for reintegration of displaced farmers, vehicles to transport returnees to their home regions and to deliver foodstuffs, and technical and financial assistance in rebuilding livestock herds.

56. Democratization in Chad could not be fully implemented unless those obstacles were removed. His delegation renewed its appeal to Governments, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations for assistance in implementation of repatriation and reintegration programmes for voluntary returnees and displaced persons.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SIXTH SESSION

Official Records

THIRD COMMITTEE
35th meeting
held on
Friday, 8 November 1991
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 35th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. AL-SHAALI (United Arab Emirates)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 97: REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES, QUESTIONS RELATING TO REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS AND HUMANITARIAN QUESTIONS (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 94: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (continued)

(a) QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION AND TO YOUTH, AGEING, DISABLED PERSONS AND THE FAMILY (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 93: RIGHT OF PEOPLES TO SELF-DETERMINATION (continued)

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15 November 1991

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 97: REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES, QUESTIONS RELATING TO REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS AND HUMANITARIAN QUESTIONS (continued) (A/46/3 (chap. VII, sect. H) and Add.1, A/46/12 and Add.1, A/46/134 and Corr.1, A/46/139, A/46/323-S/22836, A/46/344, 371, 428-435, 471, A/46/501/Rev.1, 568, 612)

1. Ms. LAFONTANT-MANKARIOUS (United States of America) commended the High Commissioner for her initiatives to ensure emergency preparedness and response capability. Those initiatives focused on adequate and flexible funding, deployment of qualified staff and stockpiling of critical supplies. Her delegation had supported emergency response efforts of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) through the design and financing of an emergency management training programme, and welcomed the recent doubling of the amount of the Emergency Fund. Her Government's recent additional contribution, in response to the High Commissioner's initiative, would assist in establishing stockpiling arrangements to improve delivery time of urgently needed assistance. The question of timely and adequate staffing to respond to the immediate needs of new refugee flows remained her delegation's major concern. She emphasized the need for increased female representation among UNHCR staff and that of the implementing partners.

2. Voluntary repatriation of refugees in safety and dignity was acknowledged as the most lasting solution. In 1991, plans had been developed for the return of South African, Cambodian and Western Saharan refugees, and prospects for the return of refugees in several other regions appeared bright. For voluntary repatriation to be successful, however, other agencies must play their part in the pre- and post-repatriation phases by creating conditions conducive to safe return and providing services enabling returnees to become self-reliant.

3. UNHCR had made strides in developing the Guidelines on the Protection of Refugee Women, but the increased participation of refugee women was required in all phases of planning and implementation of assistance and protection. Action on their behalf must be based on the principle of integration. To implement those policy guidelines fully, visible commitment on the part of senior management, rigorous accountability of operational staff, expanded training, and officers assigned solely to protection and assistance of refugee women and children would be needed.

4. The High Commissioner had before her a daunting agenda for 1992, but with the support of States, non-governmental organizations and United Nations agencies, she could succeed.

5. Mr. SIR EL KHATIM (Sudan) said that his delegation was grateful for the Secretary-General's efforts to address the critical humanitarian situation in the Horn of Africa and welcomed the establishment of the special emergency programme for the Horn of Africa. It also appreciated UNHCR efforts to reduce pressure on host countries.

6. For the past 30 years, the Sudanese people had extended ungrudging hospitality to refugees. Though its people had shouldered a heavy burden, the Sudanese Government had remained committed to international and regional conventions governing refugees and continued to protect and assist them. In view of those sacrifices, the international community must share the burden of developing the areas inhabited by refugees. His delegation appealed for timely and adequate support. Development assistance to refugees was vital, as it raised them to the level of producers, rather than simply recipients. An atmosphere conducive to voluntary repatriation currently existed in the region, and understandings reached with the Governments in Ethiopia and in Chad were encouraging. Support from the international community would be needed. Political stability, security and availability of basic services in the country of origin were also determining factors.

7. The presence of refugees over a long period of time had affected the environment: continuous cutting of trees for fuel had led to soil erosion and desertification. The international community must assess the situation and mobilize appropriate resources in such areas. That topic should be discussed at the forthcoming United Nations Conference on Environment and Development as well.

8. He renewed the appeal for financing of rehabilitation projects called for in General Assembly resolution 45/160. Certain projects had been reduced in scope because UNHCR had not received adequate contributions. Currently, the Government of the Sudan was offering a favourable exchange rate to encourage specialized agencies to carry out their projects in the country.

9. His delegation welcomed the High Commissioner's new ideas and suggestions, especially with reference to preventive measures, and pledged its continuing cooperation with UNHCR.

10. Mr. Jong Moon CHOI (Republic of Korea) said that his delegation had mixed feelings regarding the current and future world refugee situation. On the one hand, it unequivocally commended the achievements of UNHCR in protecting and assisting refugees. Yet, at the same time, it was dismayed by the grave realities hampering efforts to remedy their plight necessitating the extension of the UNHCR mandate. Over the years, UNHCR had been forced to expand and diversify its activities to adapt to massive population movements caused by natural and man-made disasters.

11. Prevention was obviously the most effective solution. Early-warning systems would mitigate and sometimes eliminate the impact of refugee problems. The experimental UNHCR Emergency Alert System deserved attention

(Mr. Jong Moon Choi, Republic of Korea)

and further reinforcement, along with enhanced cooperation with the similar systems developed by other United Nations agencies.

12. Inter-agency cooperation should not, however, be limited to early-warning systems, considering the daunting magnitude of the refugee problem. For example, UNICEF and UNESCO had undertaken a joint programme in refugee education assistance, and such programmes could be extended to such areas as sanitation, transportation and nutrition. During the Persian Gulf crisis, United Nations agencies and other relevant organizations had established a joint humanitarian plan of action which had allowed a multidimensional crisis to be handled effectively. UNHCR had assumed responsibility for managing camps, while food, medical services and transportation had been provided by the most capable organization. His delegation favoured some form of systematic and institutionalized cooperation.

13. A key element of any comprehensive approach would be the cure of the root causes of refugee flow, such as civil strife and human rights abuses, but development stood out as one of the most significant factors. Fostering development could have the dual effect of defusing the underlying force driving refugees from extreme poverty, as well as providing the conditions for voluntary repatriation. His delegation was aware of the limits of the UNHCR mandate and resources which prevented it from becoming involved in development, yet it could achieve significant results as a catalyst.

14. Despite the financial constraints, refugee children should be given top priority. They would some day return to their homeland to live a normal life, but without a solid foundation from which to face the future, saving the child's life had limited significance. Options should be thoroughly explored so that refugee operations would no longer depend on stop-gap fund-raising.

15. In conclusion, his delegation noted with satisfaction the recent agreement reached between South Africa and UNHCR establishing the parameters for repatriation of exiles and refugees.

16. Mr. VILLAGRAN DE LEON (Guatemala), speaking also on behalf of the delegations of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua, said that they had welcomed the High Commissioner's recent visit to Central America and her participation in the meeting of the Follow-up Committee of the International Conference on Central American Refugees held in Managua. The Central American countries worked closely with UNHCR and appreciated its advice and humanitarian assistance. They were currently cooperating with the Office on voluntary repatriation, in pursuance of the Governments' commitments under the peace aims of the Esquipulas II Agreement. Refugees had to be protected, and their human rights, security and well-being assured, pending voluntary return in safe conditions, or settlement in new communities, according to individual choice. It was a continuous process, calling for measures at every stage, starting with protection of human beings, particularly women, children and older people, who constituted the largest proportion of the refugee population.

(Mr. Villagran de Leon, Guatemala)

17. The five Central American delegations shared the concern expressed in the High Commissioner's report over the unprecedented deterioration in the world refugee situation and the heavy burden imposed on countries of asylum - most of them developing countries already facing formidable difficulties. There had, however, been some encouraging developments, such as the adoption of comprehensive regional plans for achieving lasting solutions and the establishment of new mechanisms such as the Tripartite Commission. The International Conference on Central American Refugees and its Concerted Plan of Action had marked a step forward in the regional peace process started by the Esquipulas II Agreement. Its objectives had been to consolidate progress in protection and assistance for refugees, draw up programmes for durable solutions, enlist the international community's support and mobilize funds for voluntary repatriation and integration. Follow-up measures included the establishment of national coordination committees and national support groups in every country, with the assistance of UNHCR and UNDP. An important conclusion of the Conference had been the need for continued support from the United Nations system.

18. The progress of peace and reconciliation in Central America brought new challenges, with the impact of returned refugees on other population groups and the persistence of internal migration. A transition period would be needed between the emergency-assistance phase and the integration of returned populations. The Follow-up Committee had agreed to establish a framework for cooperation with non-governmental organizations and the international community and to strengthen national follow-up mechanisms. The Governments of the five Central American countries had shown their will to create the conditions necessary for the repatriation of thousands of refugees. They had devised flexible strategies so as to adapt the Plan of Action to regional conditions. They continued to give priority to voluntary repatriation and already a number of refugee camps had been closed. The return of refugees would be followed by reconstruction, rehabilitation and integration into all spheres of productive life.

19. Mr. PADILLA (Philippines) said that the political changes sweeping the world today were helping to create conditions for solving certain refugee problems. His country supported the view that UNHCR must chart a forward-looking strategy focusing on prevention and addressing the totality of the refugee problem. He noted with appreciation the work done by the Working Group on Solutions and Protection in defining who needed international protection. A distinction between real refugees and economic migrants would help identify the ways to prevent outflows.

20. He agreed on the need to improve the Office's emergency preparedness and response mechanism and supported arrangements that would enable UNHCR to utilize fully the political and humanitarian potential of the United Nations system, particularly a stand-by arrangement for funds, personnel and equipment with an inter-agency secretariat. The Philippines welcomed the decision to establish a new post of coordinator for refugee children within UNHCR, which would help meet the needs of one of the most vulnerable groups.

(Mr. Padilla, Philippines)

21. His country supported all efforts that encouraged voluntary repatriation - the most desirable solution - and welcomed regional, comprehensive approaches, such as that adopted by the International Conference on Central American Refugees, and the Comprehensive Plan of Action for Indo-Chinese Refugees.

22. As a country of first asylum, the Philippines was providing temporary asylum to some 25,000 Indo-Chinese refugees. The Comprehensive Plan of Action should be implemented in a coordinated manner with the full cooperation of the countries of origin, the first-asylum countries, the countries of resettlement and donor countries. Implementation of the Plan would lead to the resettlement of all refugees and the repatriation of all non-refugees.

23. His delegation expressed its appreciation to the European Community for its rehabilitation and reintegration programme in Viet Nam for Vietnamese returnees and, at the same time, stressed the responsibility of the countries of origin to ensure conditions which averted forced exile and promoted the return of refugees. In view of the signing of the Paris agreements on Cambodia, the international community should fully support the repatriation of Cambodian refugees and displaced persons under the auspices of UNHCR and should give equal priority to the reconstruction of Cambodia to prevent conditions that might cause returnee emergencies.

24. The Philippines called for full implementation of the Oslo Plan of Action on the Plight of Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons in Southern Africa. It was a matter of great concern to learn that the basic situation in the area had not improved. The international community must address that situation and provide additional resources for urgent relief.

25. Mr. ELARABY (Egypt) said that the positive changes that had come about in the world had not yet led to a fundamental restructuring of the international economic system, without which the international community would continue to witness a worsening socio-economic situation in the developing countries.

26. In the past year, moreover, several disasters and upheavals in the Middle East and Africa had caused an unprecedented exodus of people within a short period of time. Those new phenomena underscored the need to reconsider the definition of refugees and persons deserving protection under the relevant United Nations conventions. There was a need to avoid strict adherence to rigid concepts of a bygone period, which might hamper humanitarian assistance. In that connection, the Convention of the Organization of African Unity Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa and the Cartagena Declaration on Refugees could provide considerable guidance. The recommendations by the Working Group on Solutions and Protection, which related to a wide range of refugee situations, provided an important practical step in that direction. Egypt stressed the need for coordination between the United Nations system and all other relevant international organizations in order to ensure a swift response to emergency situations and take preventive measures where necessary. The International Committee of the Red Cross had

(Mr. Elaraby, Egypt)

played a constructive role by providing invaluable assistance in many emergency situations, particularly armed conflicts.

27. The lack of growth in the UNHCR budget for general programmes, despite the enormous increase in the number of refugees, highlighted the need for increased resources. His delegation commended UNHCR for converting the deficit in that budget in 1989 to a surplus in 1990 and expressed satisfaction at the part played by the donor countries, enabling UNHCR to fulfil its role during the Gulf crisis.

28. On the other hand, the success of the Office's financial management had also been due to numerous restrictions in allocating the limited resources available for existing programmes. In some cases that had reduced the ability of UNHCR to deal with substantial aspects of the relief programmes such as education and the environment, especially in Africa. Its efficiency in dealing with major crises demonstrated that resources and efforts should be increased to enhance the preventive potential of the Office and the United Nations system in general.

29. He reaffirmed Egypt's unequivocal support for the efforts by UNHCR and all other relevant international organizations in the field of humanitarian assistance. His country spared no effort in promoting peaceful mediation in regional conflicts in Africa and the Middle East to eliminate the causes of migration. The breakthroughs achieved by UNHCR in dealing with refugee problems in Asia, Central America and Africa as well as the emergency situations in the Gulf and West Africa were indeed commendable. Nevertheless, much remained to be done to ensure adequate international protection for thousands of refugees in many parts of the world, especially Palestine and Africa. The international community should address the root causes, including poverty, social degradation, oppression, persecution and violations of human and peoples' rights.

30. Mrs. SYAHRUDDIN (Indonesia) stressed the need to gain a better understanding of the root causes of the endless cycle of mass migration and refugee problems. The establishment of an early-warning system would facilitate a quick response by the international community to crisis situations and perhaps pre-empt migration. Her delegation was encouraged by the attention given by UNHCR to inter-agency cooperation. Those efforts should provide for complementarity of activities and broaden the Office's capacity to respond to current and emerging situations.

31. Indonesia welcomed the encouraging signs of progress in Latin America and the Caribbean but was deeply concerned at the continuing plight of refugees in Africa. Her country provided support and humanitarian assistance to refugees in Africa and stressed the essential need for international burden-sharing in order to find just and lasting solutions.

32. The tragic events in the Gulf region and the ongoing refugee situation in the Middle East were of profound concern to Indonesia, which had contributed

(Mrs. Syahruddin, Indonesia)

food and supplies to refugees in the region and hoped that a solution would be found quickly. The recent Madrid peace conference might be the first step towards resolving the prolonged plight of the Palestine refugees.

33. In South-East Asia, a considerable effort had been made in implementing the Comprehensive Plan of Action for Indo-Chinese Refugees, which was an effective instrument for addressing the problem and should be implemented in its entirety. The Orderly Departure Programme had been expanded and had made satisfactory progress. Regrettably, the countries in the region had experienced a renewed influx of "economic migrants". Two specific issues remained unresolved: the repatriation of persons ineligible for refugee status and the reduction of clandestine departures. A growing number of people in refugee camps did not have refugee status but refused voluntary repatriation. That problem was a matter of deep concern for Indonesia and urgently required a solution.

34. Her Government appreciated the resettlement programmes undertaken thus far and hoped that resettlement countries would further enlarge their quotas in proportion to the increased number of new arrivals in countries of first asylum. Furthermore, the countries that opposed the involuntary repatriation of persons ineligible for refugee status should offer effective intermediate solutions, instead of leaving the burden to be shouldered indefinitely by the country of first asylum. The idea of establishing a regional holding centre for such people had considerable merit.

35. In Indonesia, the refugee population had increased to nearly 20,000, some of whom were unaccompanied minors. Her delegation underscored Indonesia's concern that unaccompanied minors and children should be given priority in the screening process and accorded their rights under the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Lastly, she expressed her country's appreciation for the efforts undertaken by UNHCR and reaffirmed Indonesia's commitment to the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan of Action.

36. Mr. IBRAHIM (Djibouti) noted that recent disturbances in the Horn of Africa had brought new waves of refugees and there were now more than 22 million people threatened with famine. The main causes were civil war, chronic drought and widespread poverty. The countries that bore the burden of displaced populations were the ones least able to support it. His country was deeply grateful to friendly countries, the United Nations system and the non-governmental organizations for their support, and to the Secretary-General for his personal commitment.

37. Djibouti had had to deal with refugee problems ever since its independence. Despite its limited resources, it had given asylum to refugees and had worked to find durable solutions, with the assistance of UNHCR. The refugee population in Djibouti of nearly 100,000 was affecting the country's economic and social situation. Overpopulation and the felling of trees was also causing environmental degradation.

(Mr. Ibrahim, Djibouti)

38. Djibouti, although one of the least developed countries, would continue its efforts to meet the needs of refugees and displaced persons and to provide for their protection in accordance with its humanitarian obligations.

39. He welcomed the dialogue on ways and means of strengthening coordination to ensure more effective and speedy humanitarian aid in the United Nations system. He welcomed UNHCR's new emergency preparedness and response mechanism. He also welcomed the proposal to set up a reserve fund.

40. It was important for emergency aid to be carried out under the broader framework of development; rehabilitation, reconstruction and development should be part of the international community's joint efforts. Although development as such was not part of the Office's mandate, its role should include urging donors and development agencies to direct their efforts towards durable solutions. He was encouraged to see that the High Commissioner's priorities included voluntary repatriation, and he welcomed her intention to act as a catalyst.

AGENDA ITEM 94: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (continued)

(a) QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION AND TO YOUTH, AGEING, DISABLED PERSONS AND THE FAMILY (continued) (A/C.3/46/L.4, L.5*, L.6, L.18, L.19, L.21, L.24)

Draft resolution A/C.3/46/L.4 and the amendment thereto (A/C.3/46/L.24)

41. Mr. KONIG (Germany) said that his delegation's amendment (A/C.3/46/L.24) to draft resolution A/C.3/46/L.4, on the monitoring of international plans and programmes of action in the field of social development, was of a procedural nature and was intended to enable the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs to continue implementing the Guiding Principles for Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes. He read out several corrections to the text of the draft resolution and of the amendment.

42. Draft resolution A/C.3/46/L.4, as amended by Germany, was adopted without a vote.

Draft resolution A/C.3/46/L.5*

43. Draft resolution A/C.3/46/L.5* was adopted without a vote.

Draft resolution A/C.3/46/L.6

44. Draft resolution A/C.3/46/L.6 was adopted without a vote.

Draft resolution A/C.3/46/L.19

45. Draft resolution A/C.3/46/L.19 was adopted without a vote.

Draft resolution A/C.3/46/L.18

46. Mr. GANSUKH (Mongolia), introducing draft resolution A/C.3/46/L.18, on behalf of the sponsors, said that they had been joined by Australia, Belarus, Burkina Faso, Cuba, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guinea, India, Mozambique, Senegal, Thailand and Viet Nam.

47. Both International Literacy Year and the World Conference on Education for All had been made possible by partnerships inspired by the realization that the current state of education would have a profound impact on future social conditions throughout the world. Although those events had represented a turning point in the struggle for a literate world, the continued prevalence of illiteracy made the promotion of education one of the international community's most urgent tasks. The success of the education projects being implemented in Asia and the Pacific, Africa and Latin America depended on the support of all States.

48. The sponsors considered it was essential for the United Nations to follow the example of UNESCO by continuing to monitor the progress of literacy and conducting a mid-decade review of the progress made and problems encountered in that area at the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. They hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

49. Mrs. ZADOFF (Costa Rica) and Mr. BANDARA (Sri Lanka) said that their delegations wished to join the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.3/46/L.18.

Draft resolution A/C.3/46/L.21

50. Mrs. SAMONTE-LIMJUCO (Philippines), introducing draft resolution A/C.3/46/L.21, on the implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons and the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons, on behalf of the sponsors, said that the sponsors were acutely aware of the need to shift the focus of the United Nations programme on disability from awareness-raising to action. Paragraph 8 of the draft resolution had been revised to read:

> "8. Also requests the Secretary-General to finalize during 1992 the review of the translation into the official languages of the United Nations of the World Programme of Action, in particular the use of the terms 'impairment', 'disability', 'handicap' and 'disabled person';".

51. The Beijing Guidelines for the Establishment and Development of National Coordinating Committees on Disability, referred to in paragraphs 6 and 9, had not yet been translated into all the official languages of the United Nations. She hoped that the translations would be made available as soon as possible so that the Committee could take action on the draft resolution.

52. Mr. FISSENKO (Belarus) said that his delegation wished to join the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.3/46/L.21.

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued)
(A/C.3/46/L.23)

Draft decision A/C.3/46/L.23

53. Draft decision A/C.3/46/L.23 was adopted without a vote.

54. Mr. TISSOT (United Kingdom) asked the Chairman to confirm that the draft resolutions and decisions under consideration at the current meeting had no programme budget implications.

55. The CHAIRMAN replied that, according to the Secretariat, the draft resolutions and decisions had no programme budget implications.

AGENDA ITEM 93: RIGHT OF PEOPLES TO SELF-DETERMINATION (continued)
(A/C.3/46/L.10/Rev.1, L.13/Rev.1)

Draft resolution A/C.3/46/L.10/Rev.1

56. Mr. HERVO-AKENDENGUE (Gabon) introduced draft resolution A/C.3/46/L.10/Rev.1 on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that were members of the Group of African States, and read out two minor revisions to the text.

57. Mr. MOR (Israel) said he was disappointed that the revised draft resolution failed to reflect the historic negotiations which had recently taken place in Madrid and which were the basis of peace efforts in the Middle East. The bias of the draft resolutions betrayed against his country only weakened it as a whole.

58. The CHAIRMAN pointed out that the draft resolution was merely being introduced, and that action would be taken on it at a later date.

Draft resolution A/C.3/46/L.13/Rev.1

59. Mrs. OGUNLEYE (Nigeria), speaking on behalf of the sponsors, said that Viet Nam had withdrawn its sponsorship of draft resolution A/C.3/46/L.13/Rev.1, and that Ghana had joined the list of sponsors. Paragraph 10 of the draft resolution had been revised so that it began with the words "Requests the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights to report to the General Assembly ...", and ended after the phrase "highlighted in the report". The sponsors hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

60. Ms. MANSARAY (Sierra Leone) said that her delegation wished to join the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.3/46/L.13/Rev.1.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SIXTH SESSION

Official Records

THIRD COMMITTEE
36th meeting
held on
Monday, 11 November 1991
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 36th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. AL-SHAALI (United Arab Emirates)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 97: REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES, QUESTIONS RELATING TO REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS AND HUMANITARIAN QUESTIONS (continued)

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18 November 1991

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 97: REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES, QUESTIONS RELATING TO REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS AND HUMANITARIAN QUESTIONS (continued) (A/46/3 (chap. VII, sect. H) and Add.1, A/46/12 and Add.1, 134 and Corr.1, 139, A/46/323-S/22836, A/46/344, 371, 428-435, 471, 501/Rev.1, 568, 612)

1. Mr. RAZI (Afghanistan) stressed the need to address the root causes of refugee flows and underscored the importance of preventive measures, particularly with regard to man-made causes. In the case of the Afghan refugees, war was a major cause of refugee flows. His Government therefore sought to end the war in order to pave the way for the voluntary return of the refugees. The 1988 Agreements on the Settlement of the Situation Relating to Afghanistan set forth the fairest solution. Under the Agreements, the parties had the obligation to take all necessary measures to ensure the voluntary return of the Afghan refugees temporarily living in Pakistan.

2. All Afghan refugees wishing to return to their homeland could do so freely. All returnees had the same rights and obligations as other nationals of Afghanistan. In spite of economic constraints, his Government provided the necessary facilities for resettling returnees in their provinces of origin, including free transportation, accommodation in the Peace Guest Houses, and employment. More than 70,000 Afghans had returned through the Voluntary Repatriation Pilot Project, and an additional 30,000 spontaneous returnees, mainly from the Islamic Republic of Iran, had been assisted through the UNHCR Guest House Programme. The number of spontaneous returnees in 1990, unassisted by UNHCR, was estimated at 100,000.

3. Serious consideration should be given to the fact that no large-scale, organized repatriation of Afghan refugees from the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan had taken place in 1990. Experience showed that there were obstacles impeding organized repatriation. His Government was ready to discuss those obstacles and insisted on consultations before launching any repatriation projects. He hoped that Member States and humanitarian organizations would make a positive response in order to implement similar projects, as called for under General Assembly resolution 45/174. The pilot projects helped to ensure the orderly and safe return of Afghan refugees. His country was prepared to cooperate with the relevant United Nations organizations to remove any obstacles in that regard.

4. His delegation appreciated the continued support of UNHCR and the World Food Programme for the Peace Guest House project in Afghanistan. Nevertheless, the Peace Guest Houses situated in the border cities, especially in the western part of the country, faced serious difficulties due to the large number of returnees. The reception centres and guest houses should be expanded and the Office should give more attention to providing food, medication and air transport.

(Mr. Razi, Afghanistan)

5. The new political climate in Afghanistan raised hope for a durable solution. UNHCR, with the cooperation of the United Nations Humanitarian and Economic Assistance Programmes Relating to Afghanistan, should prepare for the resettlement of the refugees. His Government was willing to allow all Afghan refugees to return to their homeland and condemned any attempt to slow that process.

6. Mr. NEÇAJ (Albania) said that his country, like the other Eastern European countries, had embarked on a series of reforms to create a truly democratic society and a market economy. Those reforms, however, were being carried out in a very tense economic situation, marked by high unemployment, industrial paralysis, trade and financial deficits and lack of food. The sudden collapse of the old political system and the severe economic crisis had led to the mass exodus of Albanian citizens to Greece, Italy and other countries to find a better life. That exodus had created difficulties for neighbouring countries and his Government, in collaboration with the Governments of those countries, sought to find the best solutions to that problem. Aware of the lack of local funds, Albania viewed foreign investment and credits as a means to bring about economic stability.

7. The great political changes that had occurred in Albania had convinced neighbouring States and the relevant United Nations bodies that Albanian nationals leaving the country should be considered economic immigrants rather than political refugees and that their problems should be solved on that basis. His Government considered all Albanians who had left the country illegally in July 1990 and through the mass exodus in 1991 as full-fledged nationals, who could enter and leave the country whenever they liked. Tens of thousands of Albanians had returned to their country and were being reintegrated into its social and political life.

8. Albania considered it had the right to take an interest in the way its nationals were integrated into the social and economic life of host countries and to ensure dignified treatment for all of them. His Government had informed the High Commissioner of that position and underscored its concern about Albanian nationals who had been mistreated and subjected to discrimination in Yugoslavia. It was hoped that that would not recur.

9. His country would be grateful if the States concerned showed understanding and support in order to enable Albanian refugees to cope with difficulties, particularly in finding temporary employment. In that connection, he expressed sincere appreciation to the Governments of Italy, Greece and Germany for the readiness that they had shown in that regard. Concluding international agreements on legal migration for temporary employment coupled with foreign investment would be very useful. His Government had negotiated with the International Organization for Migration on ways to help legal migrants.

10. Mr. OULIA (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that lack of respect for human dignity harmed international social relations and had created the problem of refugees. The refugee crisis must be dealt with in a responsible manner by Governments, international organizations and domestic groups. In conformity with holy Islamic prescriptions, his country had welcomed millions of refugees during the past decade.

11. Earlier in 1991, their number had exceeded 5.3 million, making the Islamic Republic of Iran the primary host country for refugees. It was doing its best to settle those remaining and to ensure their safety and well-being. There had been almost 3 million Afghan and almost 1 million Iraqi refugees in his country. The honourable return of the Afghan refugees was coming closer to realization because Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran had declared their readiness to facilitate voluntary repatriation.

12. A few months earlier, faced with the largest and swiftest refugee influx in the history of UNHCR, his country had taken immediate steps to meet the refugees' basic needs. The generous assistance by the international community and the United Nations system to help Iraqi refugees had had to be complemented by enormous resources mobilized by his country, which had already contributed almost $2.7 billion in order to cope with that human tragedy. His delegation hoped that the United Nations would ensure the continuation of and consolidate essential services to Iraqi refugees before the coming winter, in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1991/5. His delegation appreciated the efforts of the Executive Delegate of the Secretary-General, UNHCR, other international organizations, and States members of the European Community in providing assistance.

13. The Islamic Republic of Iran attached great importance to speedy improvement of the United Nations humanitarian system; the existing structure should be enhanced in order to satisfy the immediate needs of refugees in times of crisis. A mechanism for increasing financial contributions could be considered in connection with the Office's mandate. The provision of emergency aid must not be politicized. A new world outlook on that problem must be based on humanitarian values. He hoped that it would be possible to bring about the honourable and safe return of all refugees throughout the world, including the Palestine refugees, who had been deprived of their fundamental rights for so long.

14. Mr. SAMPOVAARA (Finland) reaffirmed his country's commitment to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol and urged all States that had not yet done so to accede to those instruments. Finland attached particular importance to the relationship between development cooperation, democracy and respect for human rights and stressed the need to eliminate the underlying causes of refugee flows. It was becoming increasingly necessary to promote measures to avert new mass movements of people and bring about durable solutions.

(Mr. Sampovaara, Finland)

15. Voluntary repatriation was the best way to reach a lasting solution. Finland strongly supported UNHCR in its efforts to make full use of the favourable developments in Cambodia, Western Sahara, South Africa and elsewhere in order to resolve some of the most difficult refugee issues of recent times. The Office played a useful catalytic role when the possibility of voluntary repatriation existed. The international community should also improve the assistance provided to internally displaced persons.

16. Finland stressed the need to clarify the distinction between refugee flows and other population movements. Methods must be developed to reduce the increasing misuse of asylum in order to ensure better treatment of persons entitled to refugee status. There was a need for commonly accepted measures to deal with persons clearly ineligible for refugee status and bring about their speedy repatriation.

17. Women and children were the two most vulnerable groups among refugees. The reports of continuous violations of their rights called for immediate action. Finland commended UNHCR for its efforts to integrate the specific needs of refugee women into programming and welcomed the initiative of establishing the post of a Senior Coordinator for Refugee Children.

18. There was a consensus in favour of ensuring greater involvement of the United Nations system in humanitarian assistance and relief operations. The Nordic countries had promoted efforts to enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations system in meeting the challenges in the field of emergency response. His delegation commended the Commissioner for her initiatives aimed at enhancing the Office's response capability and valued highly the activities of UNHCR. Cooperation with non-governmental organizations was of vital importance in dealing with emergencies and such cooperation must be further improved in that area.

19. Mr. SZELEI (Hungary) said that, despite the spread of freedom and democracy, the global refugee situation had deteriorated significantly and required concerted international action, to which his country was fully committed.

20. In the aftermath of the cold war, Hungary continued to receive large influxes of refugees, including over 50,000 Romanian refugees in recent years. In addition, the recent events in Yugoslavia had caused over 40,000 refugees, 70 per cent of whom were women and children, to flee to Hungary in the past four months. In accordance with its obligations under the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, Hungary had stretched the limits of its capabilities by protecting and assisting those refugees, who brought the number of refugees who had fled to Hungary in the past three years to almost 100,000. The assistance and solidarity of the international community and of UNHCR had been invaluable in Hungary's efforts to respond to the rapidly worsening refugee situation.

(Mr. Szelei, Hungary)

21. The violation of human rights through systematic repression continued to be the major cause of refugee movements. He welcomed the growing recognition of the responsibility of Governments to address the root causes of such movements, particularly those involving the persecution of individuals or ethnic communities.

22. His delegation supported the view that UNHCR should, in the future, focus on emergency preparedness and response mechanisms, early-warning capabilities and voluntary repatriation. It also agreed that the United Nations response to the Kurdish refugee crisis should be thoroughly analysed so that such responses could be made more effective in the future. Modalities should be worked out for system-wide emergency responses to major humanitarian disasters, and early warning capabilities should be strengthened within an inter-agency United Nations structure, through which preventive measures could also be taken.

23. The right of refugees to return to their own countries in safety and dignity and without fear of reprisals was indispensable for a durable solution. Voluntary repatriation should also involve compensation for confiscated, lost or damaged property. On the fortieth anniversary of the establishment of UNHCR, Hungary reaffirmed its solidarity with refugees and its continuing commitment to caring for them.

24. Ms. RODNEY (Canada) said that the international community was at a crucial point in dealing with the persistent problem of refugees. It had to take measures which would bring relief to refugees but would avoid abuse by individuals seeking asylum for economic reasons, an all-too-common phenomenon, particularly in developing countries. Poor economic prospects, civil strife and environmental degradation would continue to give rise to irregular flows of immigrants, whose demands on the systems for the determination of refugee status threatened the sovereignty of States and imposed on them a significant fiscal burden. The industrialized countries needed to cooperate in solving refugee problems, basing their efforts on a system of international law.

25. Finding solutions would require, on the part of both North and South, international and national commitments in addition to the necessary political and institutional will. Her country therefore favoured developing an international strategy to deal with the links between refugee, asylum-seeker and irregular migrant flows.

26. The international community had already been innovative in its approach to the problem of mass displacements, for example in applying the safe-haven principle to the situation of Iraqi citizens displaced as a result of the Gulf war. The Gulf crisis had also shown that, despite organizational shortcomings and misgivings concerning its mandate, the international community, on the strength of its political will, had been able to respond in a coordinated fashion.

(Ms. Rodney, Canada)

27. As a result of the Gulf crisis, UNHCR had received unusually high levels of funding. Canada had contributed more than $35 million in 1991, an increase of more than 50 per cent over the previous year. Although it would make every effort to provide UNHCR with the necessary resources in 1992, her Government could not guarantee the same level of funding as in 1991.

28. The Gulf war and its aftermath had highlighted the need for greater coordination of the various United Nations agencies dealing with displaced persons. Her Government believed that it was time to appoint a senior official for humanitarian relief and disaster assistance. It strongly rejected the view that greater assistance to refugees and displaced persons could be provided merely by broadening the definition of the term "refugee" contained in the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. Such action would only further spread out the severely limited funds available, thus harming those most in need.

29. Canada had traditionally been a country of resettlement for refugees and would not abandon that role. However, like UNHCR, it was placing greater emphasis on resettlement as an instrument of protection rather than as an overall solution.

30. Not all individuals claiming refugee status were genuinely motivated by a well-founded fear of persecution, as the expression was understood under the 1951 Convention. Attempts to use the refugee-status determination procedures as a means to avoid return to the country of origin were not only an abuse of the system but also placed an unnecessary burden upon it, making it more difficult to identify persons genuinely in need of protection. Refugee-status determination procedures, combined with the social assistance provided by most industrialized countries, were costly; as a result, a disproportionate amount was being spent on a relatively small population, leaving few resources available for other refugee groups.

31. For those reasons, it was essential to re-establish control over international population flows. Failure to do so would result in loss of domestic public support, which was vital to assistance efforts for refugees. Governments were to some extent responsible for the current situation: they had long failed to harmonize their procedures for determining refugee status under the Convention. At the same time, the international community had to develop effective multilateral, bilateral and regional agreements on the issue of asylum-seekers. In that regard, her country was pleased to note that, at the recent session of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme, the Subcommittee of the Whole on International Protection had begun consideration of the concept of transferring asylum-seekers to safe third countries.

32. Many refugee situations were rooted in long-standing ethnic animosity which was very difficult to eliminate. Yet, there were some Governments which exploited those divisions for political reasons. The international community must strongly condemn such practices, which violated human rights and could lead to persecution.

33. Ms. ZINDOGA (Zimbabwe) said that, as noted in the report of the High Commissioner (A/46/12), the global refugee situation had deteriorated in an unprecedented manner. UNHCR needed to be restructured so that it could be even more responsive to the problem. In that regard, her delegation welcomed the proposed emergency preparedness and response mechanism, which would enable UNHCR to respond effectively to humanitarian emergencies. To avoid duplication, UNHCR should function as the coordinating body in all emergency situations. Furthermore, to make the proposed mechanism most effective, there should be greater cooperation between UNHCR and other relief agencies, in close consultation with Member States.

34. Her Government endorsed the establishment of a United Nations central emergency revolving fund. However, it would appreciate clarification with regard to the purpose of that fund, since the High Commissioner had already expressed the view that the Emergency Fund would help UNHCR respond more effectively to emergency situations. A permanent inter-agency committee would also strengthen inter-agency cooperation.

35. Her delegation welcomed UNHCR efforts to find durable solutions. While the situation in Latin America had improved with the return of large numbers of refugees to Nicaragua and Chile, it was likely that the situation in Haiti would lead to an outflow of refugees. Zimbabwe supported the Comprehensive Plan of Action for Indo-Chinese Refugees and urged that the rights of Vietnamese refugees should be respected, in accordance with the relevant Geneva convention. It applauded the joint effort of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), UNHCR and UNICEF to identify ways in which the United Nations could help alleviate the suffering caused by the conflict in Yugoslavia. It also endorsed the efforts of UNHCR and other relief agencies to deal with the refugee problems caused by the Gulf war.

36. Equally commendable were UNHCR activities in Africa. Since the political situation in many African countries remained unstable, voluntary repatriation of refugees was not possible. UNHCR had therefore to work closely with the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the host States to find other ways of dealing with refugee populations. Financial and material resources were needed for that effort, particularly in view of the strain placed by migrant flows on the already fragile economies of some of the host countries.

37. Her country expressed its appreciation to those countries listed in document A/46/371, the United Nations system and the European Community for responding to General Assembly resolution 45/137, which had called upon countries and agencies to undertake the measures required of them under the 1988 Oslo Declaration and the Plan of Action on the Plight of Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons in Southern Africa.

38. While there had been important political progress in southern Africa, the basic problem of refugees, returnees and displaced persons in that region remained unchanged; the Oslo Declaration and the Plan of Action were still relevant. The situation in Mozambique was giving rise to an increasing outflux. UNHCR had opened an office in South Africa to deal with

(Ms. Zindoga, Zimbabwe)

repatriation issues. That office needed to work closely with South African liberation movements; it could also be involved in monitoring the new wave of refugees fleeing the unstable political situation in South Africa.

39. Apartheid had been identified at the 1988 International Conference on the Plight of Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons in Southern Africa as the root cause of the problem of refugees and displaced persons in that region. While it was no longer on the books, apartheid was far from being eradicated. She appealed to the international community to continue its efforts to eliminate that system, which had caused untold suffering.

40. Mr. JIN Yongjian (China) said that, despite multilateral efforts, the refugee situation remained extremely grave. None the less, there had been some encouraging progress in certain regions, particularly Central America and southern Africa. With the settlement of the Cambodian conflict, voluntary repatriation of a large number of Cambodians would soon be a reality. All of that progress was a result of the efforts of the international community, UNHCR and other relief agencies.

41. While far from perfect, the report of the Working Group on Solutions and Protection to the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme provided a sound basis for further study of the root causes of the problem of refugees, displaced persons and asylum-seekers and the mechanisms for solving that problem. Generally speaking, the report was balanced and dealt with issues of concern to all parties. It was regrettable that, owing to the insistence of certain countries, the Executive Committee had been limited to accepting the report, rather than adopting it, as had been advocated by the majority of Committee members. His country endorsed the Executive Committee's proposal to convene an inter-sessional meeting of the Subcommittee of the Whole on International Protection for further consideration of the report.

42. Since the early years of UNHCR, the refugee problem had shifted from Europe to the developing countries. The number of refugees had increased considerably and attention had turned to groups of refugees rather than individuals. Many refugee problems had remained unsolved for decades. In connection with the changing face of the refugee problem, his delegation endorsed the expanded UNHCR mandate and the definition of the term "refugee" in accordance with the relevant General Assembly resolutions.

43. His Government had long believed that the refugee question could be solved only by removing the root causes, which included wars, internal conflicts, armed aggression and political instability. Those causes merited careful and realistic analysis. An important approach to solving the problem of refugees was to promote harmony between States and to establish a new international political and economic order, based on respect for human rights. Ideological issues should not be permitted to influence the work of UNHCR, which should strive to preserve the non-political and humanitarian nature of its efforts.

(Mr. Jin Yongjian, China)

44. His delegation endorsed the High Commissioner's proposals regarding the management of human resources and the stockpiling of basic materials required for emergency situations. The key to enhancing United Nations capacity to meet humanitarian emergencies was to improve the coordination among the various agencies involved.

45. The increasing flow of refugees had also highlighted the problem of internally displaced persons. That problem gave rise to additional issues relating to State sovereignty and the right of States to settle their internal affairs. Because of their colonial history, many developing countries, including China, were acutely aware of the importance of State sovereignty. His country felt, therefore, that any attempt to assist internally displaced persons must be based on the Charter and should be carried out only at the request or with the consent of the country concerned. In view of the complexity of the issue, there could be no single settlement procedure. Different methods should be used according to the circumstances.

46. As a party to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, his Government had honoured all its obligations, had based its refugee policy on those instruments and had guaranteed the rights of the Indo-Chinese refugees to which it played host. It would continue to cooperate in all international efforts to resolve the problem of refugees.

47. Mr. GOSHU (Ethiopia) said that his delegation endorsed the High Commissioner's proposal to establish an emergency preparedness and response mechanism to confront the problem of refugees at an early stage. The contents of the annual report of the Office (A/46/12) were alarming. Despite hopeful signs of a settlement of a number of the outstanding regional conflicts, the global refugee situation would remain critical for some time. The international community must mobilize resources to assist UNHCR and the Governments concerned in resolving the problem through repatriation, rehabilitation and resettlement.

48. The recent events in Ethiopia, which had seen the demise of a dictatorial regime most responsible for the influx of refugees to neighbouring countries, had given rise to justifiably high hopes. A 30-year civil conflict - another root cause for the refugee problem - had come to an end, and Ethiopian refugees had begun to return, increasing the burden on an ailing economy and a land devastated by war. His Government was committed to democratic principles and to respect for human rights and the rule of law. It was determined to forge friendly relations with its neighbours and to work in concert towards resolving the refugee problem in the regio- To that end, the previous week the Presidents of Ethiopia and Djibouti had called for the i-mediate convening of an international conference on refugees and displaced persons of the subregion with a view to securing humanitarian help for their rehabilitation and settlement.

(Mr. Goshu, Ethiopia)

49. As long as poverty reigned in that part of the world, there would be movements of populations across borders, and to meet the problem, massive assistance was needed of the type offered to Europe in the aftermath of the Second World War. In that context, his delegation welcomed the launching of a special emergency programme for the Horn of Africa. Ethiopia must cope with hundreds of thousands of refugees from neighbouring countries in immediate need of assistance and 10 million Ethiopians displaced by drought and civil war. Although strictly speaking, the latter group did not fall within the purview of UNHCR, there were precedents to justify providing such persons with assistance. There was a danger that his Government would be unable to meet the needs of the returning refugees. His Government expressed its satisfaction with the coordinated approach taken by the various United Nations agencies in responding to humanitarian needs in the Horn of Africa and would work closely with donor Governments and UNHCR in their endeavours to find a solution.

50. Mr. BARKER (Australia) said that his delegation welcomed the High Commissioner's proposals for a new emergency preparedness and response mechanism, supported the increase in the level of the Emergency Fund and subscribed to the suggestions on deploying current staff in multiskilled emergency response teams and establishing emergency stockpiles.

51. Despite encouraging progress towards administrative and financial improvement of the Office, financial discipline must be maintained and clear and realistic priorities set.

52. Australia welcomed the attention given to the issue of refugee women and children, a problem to which UNHCR programmes must be increasingly responsive.

53.The world had been witnessing larger and more complex movements of people. Many of those involved were refugees, for whom there was a well-established response mechanism. Others had been displaced by war, civil strife, poverty or natural disaster. A third and increasingly numerous group consisted of those whose movement was essentially migratory, but who used the language of persecution and human rights abuse to gain entry to and extended stay in countries where immigration controls would otherwise exclude them. Although the number of persons of concern to UNHCR had continued to grow, the vast majority were not refugees under the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees.

54. The answer was not to extend the interpretation of the "refugee" concept to that third group, because the protection needs of such people and the solutions required were qualitatively different from those concerning refugees. For persons displaced by natural or man-made disasters, priority should be given to relief and humanitarian assistance and to their returning home once their return could be effected in reasonable safety. UNHCR and a number of other organizations provided assistance to the displaced, but there was no coherent and internationally accepted regime for doing so, only a variety of ad hoc reponses.

(Mr. Barker, Australia)

55. Offering asylum to all those seeking it could jeopardize that very institution. The phenomenon also diverted resources from areas where they might be better used. For example, asylum procedures in countries of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development were costing the equivalent of one eighth of their total international assistance - 10 times UNHCR's total budget - yet only a fraction of those claiming asylum were refugees.

56. One way to respond would be to harmonize and rationalize asylum procedures. The aim should be for a fair but speedy determination of claims, and States must agree to ensure that unsuccessful claimants departed if they had no other legal basis to remain in a country.

57. Within Australia's own region, it was recognized that the outflow from Viet Nam was overwhelmingly migratory in nature, as people departed from a country with a ravaged economy and which had been isolated from international financial assistance. The Comprehensive Plan of Action, adopted in 1989 by the international community, focused on distinguishing refugees from the migratory elements of the outflow and on providing an appropriate humanitarian response to both. Only a small minority of those leaving Viet Nam were found to be refugees, usually on the basis of family links with people who had previously been resettled under humanitarian arrangements in third countries.

58. The implementation costs were very high for screening, counselling and caring for a population of 110,000 people, many of whom had already been found not to be refugees but had not yet returned to Viet Nam. Clearly, the international community must not permit that situation to continue indefinitely. Australia noted that the British, Hong Kong and Vietnamese Governments had recently signed a statement of understanding for an orderly repatriation programme from Hong Kong of those persons found not to be refugees and that the first returns under the agreement had taken place on 9 November 1991.

59. Australia had been closely involved in the conclusion of a comprehensive settlement of the Cambodia conflict. The repatriation of the 350,000 Cambodian displaced persons in camps along the Thai-Cambodian border and elsewhere in the region, for which UNHCR was the lead agency, was one of the most complex components of the settlement and would represent an unprecedented challenge for the Office. To a great extent, the success of the whole peace agreement would depend on the success of the repatriation programme. It was essential for UNHCR to be able to move ahead quickly with the operation, and Australia had already announced a contribution of $US 1 million to the Office for the first stage of the repatriation programme. His delegation urged all parties to give their strong support to UNHCR and its partner organizations to ensure an early and successful implementation of that vital task.

(Mr. Barker, Australia)

60. Despite heartening trends in the refugee situation in Africa over the past 12 months, it was a cause for deep concern that the overall number of refugees and displaced persons continued to grow. Australia commended UNHCR for its involvement in the United Nations special emergency programme for the Horn of Africa.

61. The 1951 Convention must continue to be the foundation of UNHCR's protection work, but his delegation also saw a need for an institutional framework specifically mandated to deal with displaced persons.

62. Ms. VIKEN (Norway) welcomed the proposals to improve the UNHCR emergency preparedness and response capability. For its part, Norway had recently implemented measures enabling it to contribute more efficiently to new emergencies, and it looked forward to cooperating with UNHCR and other international organizations through the new Norwegian Emergency Preparedness System.

63. Noting that plans for several large-scale repatriation and reintegration operations were in the making, her Government was encouraged by the prospects for voluntary repatriation as the preferred solution. Norway welcomed the High Commissioner's decision to make voluntary repatriation an objective in the new UNHCR strategy. It was essential to find a funding mechanism to enable the Office to mobilize the necessary resources without delay, so that repatriation and reintegration could be carried out whenever needed.

64. Norway supported preventive measures as a way of forestalling refugee flows. Among the tools that should be used were development assistance, promotion of civil and political as well as economic, social and cultural rights, assistance to returnees and the development of burden-sharing mechanisms. Such measures would require the international community to consolidate its efforts and cooperate closely on finding solutions case by case.

65. Mr. CORNEJO (Chile) said he was pleased that one of the main objectives of UNHCR was to enhance its capacity to respond to emergencies. Another was voluntary repatriation, which would require the establishment of conditions that promoted stability in sensitive areas, and would depend on the prospects for global and regional peace and security. He therefore supported the strengthening of programmes in that area as a means of devising an integrated approach to refugee problems. Mass repatriation would require concerted action by the international community, including reintegration efforts by countries of origin and economic support from various sources.

66. Chile was grateful to UNHCR for its assistance in repatriating many Chileans who had fled their country. Those efforts had been of significant help in meeting the Chilean Government's goal of national reconciliation.

(Mr. Cornejo, Chile)

67. The High Commissioner's third main objective was the prevention of refugee flows, which would require examination of their root causes. The international community should work to eliminate migratory movements for political or economic reasons by strengthening democratic systems and institutions and by promoting macroeconomic programmes for individual and collective development.

68. Mr. CALAFETEANU (Romania) said that UNHCR was to be commended for its assistance to over 20 million refugees world wide in its 40-year history. That extraordinary accomplishment had significantly helped to reduce political tensions and to foster peace.

69. The persistence of enormous population movements involving migrant workers, displaced persons, asylum-seekers and refugees indicated that the world was undergoing a period of profound change and instability. The reasons for such movements had become more complex, and included political, economic and environmental factors. The past year had witnessed an unprecedented deterioration in the global refugee situation, owing particularly to developments in the Middle East and Africa. However, there had also been an overall improvement in the international protection of refugees, as UNHCR and Member States had consolidated their regional and international cooperation in assessing and responding to the current situation and in preventing future refugee flows. Romania fully supported the High Commissioner's three-point strategy of prevention, emergency response and solutions.

70. The radical changes in Eastern Europe had resulted in the largest westward flow of refugees from that region since the end of the Second World War. In 1989, 1.2 million people had left Eastern Europe, as opposed to an annual average of about 100,000 up to the mid-1980s. That trend, which had continued in 1990 and which involved mainly ethnic Germans and Jews, was the result of political liberalization and the abolition of travel restrictions; economic restructuring and a consequent deterioration in living conditions and job opportunities; and the growth of ethnic and national tensions in the region. Given that situation, a clear distinction must be made between refugees and other categories of migrants or asylum-seekers, since the unjustified granting of refugee status could undermine assistance efforts.

71. Until the fall of the Romanian dictatorship in 1989, many of the country's citizens had fled their homeland. However, the new Government had adopted a series of measures to establish a democratic society based on freedom and the full observance of human rights. One such measure was the guarantee of freedom of movement, including the right to return. Thus, the number of legal emigrants from Romania had sharply increased, amounting to 130,000 in 1990. To facilitate their voluntary return - the most desirable solution - his Government had concluded special agreements with some of the recipient countries, and was supported by the German Government in its efforts to stop the outflow of ethnic Germans from Romania.

(Mr. Calafeteanu, Romania)

72. Since the end of 1990, Romania had also begun to receive refugees from other countries, of whom there were currently about 1,000. Despite a lack of experience, material resources and legal structures to deal with the situation, Romania had done its utmost to fulfil its obligations, even before becoming a party to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol in August 1991.

73. In June 1991, a Committee for Migration Problems had been established to coordinate all national activities and cooperative efforts with other States and international specialized bodies in connection with migration into or from Romania. The Committee was responsible, inter alia, for concluding cooperation agreements with other countries to facilitate the return and reintegration of Romanian migrants and the prevention of new outflows; developing a legal framework for the exercise of freedom of movement; standardizing rules and practices in passport and visa matters and in determining the status of foreigners, refugees and migrants; and granting emergency humanitarian assistance to migrants who came to Romania. Immigrants and returnees were assisted at the community level by local committees.

74. Romania would continue to comply with international standards on humanitarian assistance for refugees and other displaced persons, and to support the efforts of UNHCR and other humanitarian organizations.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.